

A NEW
THEOLOGICAL TREATISE;
ENTITLED, THE
DIVINE ORATOR;
OR THE
BEAUTY of HOLINESS:

CONTAINING

An accurate, though familiar Paraphrase on our
blessed Saviour's *Sermon* on the *Mount*; digested
into Sections, with *Parallel Texts*, and other
Explanatory Annotations.

To which are added,
By way of SUPPLEMENT,

A summary Account of

The LIFE of the DIVINE ORATOR.

As also two SERMONS; one, on the Imitation
of JESUS CHRIST; the other, on the
Necessity of frequent Prayer, for the obtain-
ing all the Graces and Blessings mentioned in
the preceding Treatise.

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Search the Scriptures, JOHN v. 39.

V O L. I.

L O N D O N:
PRINTED for the AUTHOR;

M DCC LXXI,

T H E INTRODUCTION.

CHRISTIAN READER,

BEFORE I enter upon my intended Paraphrase on the fifth, sixth and seventh chapters of the (a) gospel, according to (b) St. Matthew, I think it incumbent on me to turn backwards to the latter part of the fourth chapter of the same gospel, in order to make

(a) Gospel, that is, a narrative of the life, actions, death, resurrection, ascension, and doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ. The word (gospel) is a Saxon term, and signifies God's book, word, or wise sayings. The Latin term Evangelium, from the Greek (Evangelion) signifies glad-tidings, or good news; the history of our blessed Saviour being the best news that could possibly be published for the benefit of mankind. This history is contained in the writings of our St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John, who from thence are styled the four Evangelists.

(b) St. Matthew, the Evangelist, who has particularly recorded this inimitable oration of our blessed Lord; and of whom, and of his gospel, we shall give a succinct historical account in our third volume.

B

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the connection more easy and obvious to the unlettered reader.

The first step then which the blessed (c) Jesus took towards the propagation of his most holy tenets, and the establishment of those divine truths, on a basis never to be shaken, was, to

(c) Jesus, the Son of God, the true Messiah, and Saviour of the world, begotten of the Father before all ages, equal to, and consubstantial with the Father, as to his divine nature; but inferior to the Father, and of the same substance with the Virgin Mary, his mother, as to his human nature; the Second Person, however, in the sacred Trinity; the principal object of the prophecies; figured and promised in the Old Testament; expected and desired by the old patriarchs; the hope and salvation of the Gentiles; and the glory, happiness and consolation of all true christians.

The ineffable name of Jesus, or, as the Hebrews pronounce it, Jehoshua, or Joshua, signifies Saviour, or, he who shall save. No one ever bore this name with so much justice, nor so perfectly fulfilled the signification of it, as Jesus Christ, the saviour of the world, who hath saved us from sin and hell, and hath merited Heaven for us by the price of his most precious blood. As we propose to give our readers a succinct, historical account of his life and miraculous operations; &c. in the second volume, we shall expatiate no farther on this topic, however interesting and important, at this present conjuncture.

select

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select a convenient number of (*d*) apostles, whose sole employment was to wait on him throughout the whole course of his ministry, and to aid and assist him in all points, as occasion from day to day might possibly occur.

Accompanied, therefore, by those his favourite attendants, he took a tour through all (*e*) Galilee, preaching not only privately, but
openly

(*d*) Apostle, in the christian sense of the word, is one commissioned by Christ himself to preach his gospel, and propagate his religion in the world, being a term derived from the Greek verb (*apostéllein*) to send on a message. Our blessed Lord selected twelve of the number of his disciples to be invested with this apostleship; of whom our St. Matthew indeed was a publican, or custom-house officer; but all the rest, or most of them at least, were fishermen by profession, and men of no literature, but what they gained afterwards through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

(*e*) Galilee, a province of Palestine, bounded by Lebanon and Syria on the north; by Phœnicia on the west; by Samaria on the south; and principally by the river Jordan and the sea of Galilee on the east.

This province is divided into two parts; namely, the upper and the lower; the former whereof is called (in Matthew iv.) the Galilee of the Gentiles; either on the account of its being principally inhabited by the Gentiles, amongst whom

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openly in all their places, which were set apart for public worship ; and throughout the whole course of his travels, he assumed the dignified and distinguished character of an express messenger from the high and almighty One, who fills the heavens and earth with his presence ; and wherever he went, he publicly, without the least reserve or respect for persons, exhorted all his auditors in general, both rich as well as poor, to reflect on that lost and deplorable state to which they were reduced, through the unhappy fall of their first parents ; to look upon themselves as dead in trespasses and sins ; and as such, to prepare themselves, by a sincere

some Jews were only interspersed ; or rather, by reason of its bordering on divers Gentile nations ; such as the Phœnicians, Syrians and Arabians. The whole country, as we are credibly informed by the most authentic historians, was not only very fruitful, but extremely well cultivated ; and the inhabitants were, for the generality, deemed very diligent and industrious. Its towns and villages were very numerous, and so well inhabited, that the least of them did not contain less than fifteen thousand souls. It is universally known, that our blessed Saviour was surnamed the Galilean, by reason of his being brought up at Nazareth, a city of Galilee. His disciples likewise, and all those who embraced his doctrines, were called Galileans ; because all the apostles in general were natives of that province.

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and unfeigned repentance of their past transgressions, by their becoming new creatures, and spiritually born again, for their future admission into the kingdom of Heaven, or (in other terms) into the kingdom of the promised (f) Messiah, the glorious deliverer and saviour of a sinful world, whose advent (or coming) was at hand, and which they had long wished for with so much earnestness and impatience.

After these preliminary and public exhortations, in order still farther to encourage his select apostles, who were to act under his divine commission, in the promulgation of all his institutes, both in season and out of season; to

(f) Messiah, in Hebrew, Meshiah, the Anointed; from Mashah, to anoint; a name given principally, and by way of eminence, to that sovereign deliverer who was expected by the Jews, and whom they verily expect even at this day; since he is already come at the appointed time in the person of Jesus Christ, in whom the prophecies, relating to the Messiah, are fully accomplished. — The Greek word (Christos) from whence comes Christ and Christian, exactly answers to the Hebrew term (Meshiah) which signifies, one who has received unction, a king or a priest; for it was a custom among the Jews to anoint their kings and high priests; and sometimes moreover, their most venerable prophets.

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awaken his other (*g*) disciples out of their dangerous state of sinful security ; and to quicken and prompt them to pursue the one thing needful, the great and important work of their regeneration, which could only be effected through faith in him ; he wrought daily a great number of the most humane and compassionate (*b*) miracles in every place wherever he came, and

(*g*) Disciple, in the first sense of the word, means one who learns any thing from another : hence the followers of a teacher, philosopher, or head of a sect, are usually called his pupils, or disciples ; and thus the word (disciple) in the New Testament, absolutely taken, signifies a believer, a christian, a scholar, a follower of Christ or his apostles. The disciples, however, who followed our blessed Saviour from the beginning, were, in point of number, either seventy, or seventy-two ; and from thence he elected his apostles.

(*b*) Miracle is defined, by the Rev. Dr. Samuel Clarke, to be a work, effected in a manner different from the common and regular method of providence, by the interposition either of God himself, or some intelligent agent, superior to man. As it has been a matter of great controversy, whether true miracles can be worked by any less power, than the immediate power of God ; and whether, to complete the evidence of a miracle, the nature of the doctrine pretended to be proved thereby, is necessary to be taken into consideration ; we shall here oblige our readers with the above-named learned divine's sentiments on

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and healed all kind of distempers, however malignant and incurable by others, by the bare word

on so important an article ; since he has undertaken to set that controversial point in the fairest and most advantageous light. In respect to the power of God (says that judicious author) and the nature of the things themselves, all things, that are possible at all, are equally easy to be done : it is, at least, as great an act of power to cause the sun to move at all, as to cause it at any time to stand still ; yet this latter we call a miracle, the former not.

What degrees of power God may reasonably be supposed to have communicated to created beings, or subordinate intelligences, is impossible for us to determine ; therefore a miracle is not rightly defined to be such an effect, as could not have been produced by any less power than the divine omnipotence. There is no instance of any miracle in scripture, which, to an ordinary spectator, would necessarily imply the immediate operation of original, absolute, and underived power.

All things that are done in the world, are done either immediately by God himself, or by created, intelligent beings ; matter not being at all capable of any laws or powers whatsoever ; so that all those things, which we say are the effects of the natural power of matter, and laws of motion, are properly the effects of God, acting upon matter continually and every moment, either immediately by himself, or immediately by some created, intelligent being. Consequently, it is no more against the course of nature, for an angel to keep a man from

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word of his power; and, in short, in order to convince them, beyond all contradiction, that he had received his commission from his heavenly Father, and was no impostor, when some particular

from sinking in the water, than for a man to hold a straw from falling in the air, by over-powering the law of gravitation; and yet the one is a miracle, the other not so.

The only possible ways by which a spectator may certainly and infallibly distinguish, whether miracles be the works either immediately of God himself, or of some good angel employed by him; or whether, on the contrary, they are the works of evil spirits, are these: if the doctrine, attested by miracles, be in itself impious, or manifestly tending to promote vice; then, without all question, the miracles, how great soever they may appear to us, are neither wrought by God himself, nor by his commission. — If the doctrine itself be indifferent, and, at the same time, there be worked other miracles, more, and greater than the former; then that doctrine, which is attested by the superior power, must necessarily be believed to be divine: this was the case of Moses and the Egyptian magicians. If, in the last place, the doctrine, attested by miracles, tends to promote the honour of God, and the practice of righteousness among men; and yet nevertheless be not in itself demonstrable, nor could, without a revelation, be discovered to be actually true; and there is no pretence of more and greater miracles to contradict it, which is the case of the doctrine
and

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particular (*i*) lunatics, or, in other terms, such as were possessed with (*k*) devils, were brought

and miracles of Christ; then the miracles are unquestionably divine, and the doctrine must, without all controversy, be acknowledged as an immediate and infallible revelation from God.—See Clarke's evidences of natural and revealed religion.

To this quotation, we shall add a very just observation of the celebrated lord Bacon, namely, that a miracle was never wrought by God to convert an atheist; because the light of nature might have led him to confess a God: but miracles, says he, are designed to convert idolaters, and the superstitious, who have acknowledged a deity, but erred in the manner of adoring him; because no light of nature extends so far, as fully to declare the will and true worship of God.

(*i*) Lunatic, a person affected by lunacy; in scripture, sick persons are called lunatics, who are attacked principally in the changes of the moon; for example, epileptical persons, or they who have the falling sickness; mad people, or they that are tormented with fits of dismal melancholy; and lastly, such as are possessed by the devil.

(*k*) Devil. The Greek term is (*Diábolus*) a calumniator, an accuser; one, who accuseth us before God day and night; from whence he is called the accuser of the brethren. The word devil seldom occurs in the Old Testament; for there he is generally called Belial, which is a Hebrew term, that signifies one, good for nothing, a libertine; one, that is extremely wicked. He is also called Satan, which signifies an adversary, or an accuser in a court of justice.

before

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before him, those devils themselves trembled at his presence, and were compelled instantaneously, though not without the utmost reluctance, to resign their tenure, acknowledge his divinity, and beg of him not to punish them before their time.



THE

THE
DIVINE ORATOR;
OR, THE
BEAUTY of HOLINESS.

The TEXTS, according to St. MATTHEW.

C H A P. V. ver. 1, 2.

- 1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain; and when he was set, his disciples came unto him.
- 2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

P A R A L L E L T E X T S.

—And a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judea.—MARK iii. 7.

Again,

And he goeth up into a mountain; and the multitude cometh together again.

MARK iii. 13. 20.

A

A familiar PARAPHRASE of the two preceding VERSES of the TEXT.

I. **N**OW these numerous and supernatural operations, infinitely above the art of the most able and experienced physicians to accomplish, having drawn a vast multitude of the people from all parts about him; that is to say, some from Galilee, (a) Decapolis, (b) Je-

(a) Decapolis, is a country in Palestine; so called, because it contained ten principal cities, situated, some on one side, and some on the other of the river Jordan.

(b) Jerusalem. This city was antiently called Jebus, or Salem. Some have called it Solyma, and the Greeks Hierosolyma; the Hebrews called it Jeruschalaim, or Jeruschelem, which terms signify, either the vision only, or actual inheritance of peace. Though it was given to the tribe of Benjamin by Joshua; yet it appears to have been within the division of the tribe of Judah in the lxxviiiith psalm, and the 68th verse. When the Lord, however, had declared Jerusalem to be the place which he had made choice of for his habitation, it was looked upon as the metropolitan city of the Israelites in general. This city was built either on one or two hills, and was surrounded with mountains. It was situated in a stony and barren soil, and was about threescore furlongs in length.

rusalem,

rusalem, and (c) Judea; and others, even from (d) Jordan; insomuch, that they pressed too

(c) Judea is a province of Asia, which was anciently called the Land of Canaan, or Palestine; and afterwards the Land of Promise, or the Land of Israel; and lastly, Judea.

(d) Jordan, a river of great note in the sacred scriptures. Some assert, that it derives its name from the two Hebrew ones Jor and Dan; the former signifying a spring, and the latter a small town, near the source or fountain-head of this river. Others are of opinion, that it derives its original from two rivulets, one called Jor, and the other Dan; both these derivations, however, are looked upon as dubious and uncertain; for, in the first place, it is not true, that the river Jordan is formed out of two rivulets; nor that one of them was called Dan; notwithstanding the geographical maps, for the most part, give it that description: and in the next, it is certain, that the name Dan is much more modern than that of Jordan. The visible origin of the river Jordan is a little stream, the source or fountain-head whereof lies in mount Libanus, and upon which the little town called Dan is situated, about four leagues higher than Cæsarea-Philippi, where the Jordan properly begins. The other source of this river, which, in fact, is the most considerable, though the least conspicuous, is the lake called Phiala, about four leagues from Cæsarea-Philippi to the south. This lake has a communication with Jordan underground, and furnishes Cæsarea with such large supplies of water, as might pass even there for a
C river.

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too hard upon him: To avoid, therefore, that inconvenience, and in order to be better enabled to teach and instruct, not only his chosen apostles, whose aid and assistance would soon be indispensably wanted in the course of his fu-

river. The Jordan from this Caesarea-Philippi runs through a space of near fifty leagues, till it discharges itself into the Dead Sea, and there is lost. In its course, it forms the lake called Semechon, at five or six leagues distance from its spring; from thence it enters into the lake of Tiberias, and runs quite through it. It overflows its banks about the time of barley-harvest, or the feast of the passover. See Josh. iii. 15.

On both sides along the Jordan there is a great plain, which extends itself from the lake of Tiberias, as far as the Dead Sea. Josephus assures us, that this plain is twelve hundred furlongs in length, and in the width about one hundred and twenty. From the sacred scriptures themselves we are informed of the many miracles that were performed in this river. In Josh. iii. 13, &c. we read how it was divided, in order to leave a free passage for the Hebrews, under the command of that able and experienced general. In 2 Kings ii. 8. 14. we are told, how its waters were divided by the prophets Elijah and Elisha. In 2 Kings vi. 6, 7. how Elijah made the iron-part of an ax, which fell into it, swim upon the surface. And in Matthew iii. 16. we are assured, that when our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was baptized in this river, the Heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in the form of a dove.

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ture ministry, but his other disciples, and the vast throng of strangers that surrounded him, he withdrew to the top of a mountain, and there seated himself on the brow thereof, in order more easily and universally to be heard.

2. And from thence he instructed them in the fundamental laws and principles of the kingdom of their expected Messiah, and of that holy disposition and frame of mind that was absolutely necessary for their reconciliation with an offended God, and their admission into the kingdom of Heaven, through their faith in him, as the only true Messiah, and saviour of a lost and sinful world.

Occasional REFLECTIONS on the two preceding VERSES.

In this introduction, there are three articles well-worthy of a christian's most serious consideration; namely, the sacred person of the orator; the (e) mountain, or peculiar spot, which

(e) Mountain, i. e. the mount of Olives, which was situated towards the east of the city of Jerusalem, and separated from that city by the brook Kedron only, and by the valley of Jehoshaphat, which extends itself from the north to the south.

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which he pitched upon for the delivery of his divine institutions to such a numerous assembly; and the attitude, or posture, which he made choice of before he commenced his inimitable oration.

In the first place, then, let us consider who this divine orator was.—It was no less a person than the ever-blessed (*f*) Jesus, the Son of the most high God, and his minister and assistant in the creation both of the Heavens and the

This mountain was remarkable on several very solemn occasions; not only on account of our Saviour's preaching this inimitable sermon there; but because Solomon, out of compliance with his wives, who were either Ammonites or Moabites, built temples thereon in honour of their gods.—This mount (according to Josephus) was but about five furlongs from Jerusalem (that is to say) what the Jews termed a sabbath-day's journey. This mountain was likewise very remarkable for its having three several summits; but more particularly so, on account of our blessed Saviour's ascension into Heaven from that which stood in the center.

(*f*) Jesus, or as the Hebrews pronounce it, Jehoshua, or Joshua, signifies a Saviour, or, he who shall save. No one ever bore this name with so much justice, nor so perfectly fulfilled the signification of it, as Jesus Christ, the saviour of the world, who hath saved us from sin and hell, and hath merited Heaven for us by the effusion of his most precious blood, and his most ignominious and painful death upon the cross.

Earth;

Earth; in a word, the Second Person in the ever-adorable Trinity.

This divine preacher was the very identical person who was promised to Abraham and the patriarchs; the Messiah; that very universal Saviour, who was promised should come in due time; that seed of the woman in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed; who was declared to be the brightness of his father's glory, and the express image of his person. This was he who conversed with Abraham and Moses, and was the (g) angel of the covenant in

(g) Angel of the covenant, i. e. Jesus Christ, our blessed Saviour himself:—the word angel in general is so called from the Greek term (angelos) a messenger, from (angéllein) to carry a message, or execute an order: this general name is given to any of those spiritual and intelligent beings, who are supposed to execute the will of God in the government of the world.. As we read in the sacred scriptures of a great number of good or guardian angels; such, for instance, as Michael, who, in the book of Daniel, is acknowledged to be the protector of God's favourite people the Israelites; and the angel Gabriel, in the same book, is said to be the protector of the kingdom of Persia, &c. &c. So we read in sundry places of the same holy writ, of evil angels, the ministers, or instruments of God's wrath and vengeance on incorrigible and impenitent sinners; such, for instance, as the de-

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in whom the name of the great (b) Jehovah subsisted.

In

destroying angel, the angel of Satan, and the angel of the bottomless pit; as also the angel of death. In 2 Kings xix. 35. we read of Sennacherib's army being smote by the destroying angel. In 2 Cor. xiii. 7. we are told, that the angel, or minister of Satan, was suffered to buffet St. Paul, and lay numberless temptations in his way. In the revelations of St. John, the angel of the bottomless pit is said to be the prince of devils, and the same as the destroying angel; and in 2 Sam. xxiv. 16. it is said, that God slew the Israelites, the subjects of king David; because that prince, through a pride in his own power, took the number of his people, and, by that act of ambition, drew down the vengeance of the Almighty on his devoted head. In general, however, as all good angels, on the one hand, are distinguished by the name of angels of light; so, on the other, all evil ones are termed the angels of darkness.

(b) Jehovah, one of the names of the Almighty in the sacred scriptures. This name was not revealed before the time of Moses. "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, says God, Exod. vi. 3. by the name of God Almighty; but, by my name Jehovah, I was not known to them." The term (Jehovah) signifies, "He who subsists of himself, and gives being to others." This name of God is differently expressed by different authors. One writes him Jevo; others Jaho. Some distinguish him by the title of Jabe or Javé. And, in divers antient authors, we find the following names, viz. Jahoh, Javo, Jaon,

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In this most illustrious and divine person, we behold that most beneficent being, who, notwithstanding

Jaon, and Jaod. The Moors call their God Juba, whom some believe to be the same as Jehovah. The Latins, in all probability, took their Jovis, or Jovis pater, from Jehovah. It is certain, that the four letters which pronounced Jehovah, may likewise be expressed by Javo, Jaho, Jaon, Jevo, Javé, Jehvah, &c. and that the antient Hebrews were not unacquainted with the pronounciation of it; since they recited it in their prayers and in the reading of their sacred books.

The Jews, however, after the captivity of Babylon, out of an excessive and superstitious respect for this holy name, left off the custom of pronouncing it, and by that means forgot the true and genuine pronounciation of it. The Septuagint generally render it (Kúrios) the Lord. The Jews call this name of God the (Tetragrammaton) or the name with four letters, and believe, that whoever knows the true pronounciation of it cannot fail of being heard by God; and that, if they have not the happiness at this day to be heard, it is owing only to their ignorance of the true pronounciation. In their reading, or their prayers, they never mention the word Jehovah, but, instead of it, make use either of the term Adonai, or Elohim. They make, in short, a scruple of making an attempt to pronounce it; and pretend, that the angels themselves have not the liberty of using it. They tell us, that Moses performed all his miracles by virtue of the name of Jehovah, engraved on his rod; and insist farther, that we might be able

to

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notwithstanding he was cloathed with light, as with a garment, and was the exprefs likeness of God himself; yet out of pure tenderness and compassion for the fallen race of mankind, with amazing condescension laid all his glory aside, and submitted so low, as to assume an human form, surrounded with all the infirmities (tho' sinless) to which mankind are daily exposed; with this noble and generous view, that he might set us a shining example of patience, meekness, and a chearful resignation to the divine will.

This was he, who, after he had spent a tedious life of sorrow and reproach, notwithstanding all his numberless acts of loving-kindness and indulgence towards his most implacable enemies, at last submitted to the most ignominious and painful death, even the death of the cross, that all mankind, through his intercession for them, might be restored to the favour and affection of an offended God, and through faith in him, as his son, partakers of everlasting bliss.

We

to work miracles, as well as he, were we capable of coming at the perfect pronounciation of that most awful name; and flatter themselves, that the Messiah, at his coming into the world, will teach them that profound and important secret.

We are, in the next place, to reflect on that peculiar spot of ground which he pitched upon for the promulgation of his divine institutes; and that was on an adjacent eminence, or mountain: now, notwithstanding it is highly probable, that he made choice thereof with no other view than his own ease and convenience, and the advantage of his numerous auditors; yet there are some commentators who imagine, that his withdrawing to an hill, on this most solemn occasion, carries a more abstruse and mystical meaning in it than others are willing to admit of. However, as their notion is perfectly innocent, tho' a mere conjecture, we think it not altogether unworthy of the reader's attention.

As the (i) Decalogue, say they, or ten commandments, were delivered by God the Father on mount (k) Sinai, with menaces and thunder,

(i) Decalogue, the ten precepts, or commandments, delivered by God to Moses, and by him written on two tables of stone, and delivered to the Hebrews, as the basis and foundation of their religion.

(k) Mount Sinai, or mount Sina, a famous mountain of Arabia Petraea, upon which the Almighty gave the law to Moses. It stands in a kind

of

with fire and an earthquake, in order to strike
 a reverential awe and inward horror on the nu-
 merous

of peninsula, formed by the two arms of the Red Sea; one of which extends itself towards the north, and is distinguished by the name of the Gulph of Kolsun; the other stretches out towards the east, and is called the Gulph of Elan, or the Elanitic Sea. The Arabians, at this very day, call mount Sinai by the name of Tor, that is to say, the mountain, by way of eminence, and in contradistinction to all others; or else they distinguish it by the name of Gibel Moufa, i. e. the mountain of Moses. It is situated about two hundred and sixty miles from Cairo; and for the generality, it requires a journey of about ten days to travel thither. The wilderness of Sinai, where the Israelites continued incamped for near twelve months successively, and where Moses erected the tabernacle of the covenant, is elevated very considerably above the rest of the country. The ascent to it is by a very craggy way, the greatest part whereof is cut out of the rock.—Towards the extremity of this plain, on the north side, stand conspicuous two mountains, remarkably high; one whereof is called mount Sinai, and is the highest of the two; and the other is distinguished by the name of Horeb. The summits of both have very steep ascents, and stand on but a very small spot of ground, in comparison to their extraordinary elevation. That of Sinai is, at least, one third part loftier than the other, and its ascent more difficult, and much more upright. When the traveller has reached the summit, though rugged and uneven,

numerous assembly then attending and trembling below ; so the ever-blessed Jesus, his only-begotten son, was determined to explain his divine statutes on a mountain likewise ; but then (as it were) by way of contrast, he endeavoured to allure his audience by all the endearing arts of fond persuasion, and like an orator sent from Heaven, to invite them to put off the old man, and become new creatures ; to be born again of the spirit, and put their whole faith and confidence in him, as they had before acknowledged his Father ; he ad-

uneven, it is sufficient to contain about threescore persons. On this eminence is erected a little chapel, called St. Catharine's, where, 'tis conjectured, that the body of that female saint rested for no less than three hundred and sixty years ; but was some time afterwards removed from thence to a church, which was erected at the foot of the said mountain. Near the above-mentioned chapel issues a fountain of very good fresh water, which is looked upon as miraculous, as being inconceivable how water should flow from the brow of such a high and barren mountain. Now Horeb is situate to the west of Sinai ; inasmuch that, when the sun rises, the shadow of Sinai perfectly covers Horeb. Besides the small fountain above-mentioned to be on the top of Sinai, there is another at the foot of Horeb, which supplies the convent of St. Catharine with a large quantity of water.

dressed

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dressed himself to the multitude in the softest and most harmonious accents; his lips, in a word, carried nothing of terror in them; but, instead thereof, were full of grace and paternal indulgence; and the drops that distilled from them were infinitely sweeter than either the honey or the honey-comb.

The last article worthy of our serious consideration, is, the attitude or posture which he made choice of, by way of preparation, before he opened his mouth, or delivered any part of his new legislation. He sat himself down on the brow of the hill, in order either to comply with the custom, time out of mind observed by the Jewish doctors, or rabbies, when they were wont to instruct their young pupils, or disciples, in order to shew their superiority over them, and the better to command their attention:—or else, it is possible, he seated himself there with a more important view; namely, to illustrate to them, by a kind of (1) hieroglyphic, the grandeur and sublimity of those divine precepts which he was about to pronounce before them, and impress on their minds the infinite obligations they lay under

(1) Hieroglyphic, a sacred similitude, or emblem.

to him for descending from Heaven, and assuming the human nature, that they might obtain everlasting salvation, in and through his merits and mediation for them at the throne of grace, on the easy terms of their faith in him as their true Messiah.

IMPROVEMENT.

If then this divine orator was that most illustrious personage above described, who came down from Heaven with such authority, and such amazing condescension, to instruct mankind, and to restore a lost and sinful world to the favour and affection of an offended deity; if this ever-blessed Jesus was that (*m*) lamb of God,

(*m*) Lamb of God,—the prophets represent the Messiah to us like a lamb. The lamb of God is the name whereby John the baptist called Jesus Christ, when he saw him coming towards him, (John i. 29, 36.) to signify the innocence of this divine saviour, and his quality, as a victim, which was to be offered up for the sins of the world. It is very probable, that he might allude to these words of the prophet Isaiah, (chap. liii. 7.) “He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.”—And in many places of the revelations (viz. chap. v. 6, 8, 12, 13. vi. 1. vii. 9. xii. 11, &c. he is pointed out to

God, who hath overcome the (*n*) angel of death, and, by his glorious resurrection, demonstrated

us under the idea of a lamb that had been sacrificed. In Isaiah xii. 6. it is said, that, in "the time of the Messiah, the lamb and the wolf will feed peaceably together;" and in the gospel, the wicked, at the day of judgment, are compared to goats, and the righteous to sheep or lambs. And in Luke x. 3. we are told, that our blessed Saviour sent his "disciples to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, like lambs amidst wolves."

(*n*) Angel of death, the Jewish Rabbins tell us (if we may credit the learned Buxtorf) that when he has killed any person, he washes his sword in the house, thereby conveying a mortal quality to it; for which reason, the Jews, upon the death of any of their family (male or female) throw away all the water they can find within-doors. This angel (say they) stands at the bed's head of the dying person, holding a naked sword in his hand, at the point whereof hang three drops of gall. The sick man perceiving the angel, in a great fright, opens his mouth, whereupon the three drops fall in; the first of which immediately occasions his death; the second makes him pale and livid, and the last disposes him to be soon reduced to dust and ashes. The Jews farther believe, that, when any one of their sect is buried, the angel of death seats himself upon his gravé; and, at the same time, the soul of the deceased returns to his body, and sets him upon his legs; then the angel, taking an iron chain, one half whereof being as cold

monstrated his dominion over the grave; and is now the identical person who ascended in triumph to the right-hand of imperial glory and majesty, above the highest Heavens, and in and through whose merits and mediation alone it is, we have a comfortable assurance of not only leading a happy life in this world, but of obtaining everlasting happiness in that which is to come: it is then a duty indispensably incumbent on all sincere christians to hearken to his divine statutes, and make them the rule of their chearful obedience. No dangers, how great soever, ought to terrify or deter them from their perseverance; no difficulties, however seemingly insurmountable, ought to discourage them, nor any transitory enjoyments of this life allure them to swerve from their duty: may all of us, therefore, through the aid and assistance of his most Holy (*o*) Spirit,

be

cold as ice, and the other half burning hot, he strikes the body with it, and separates all the members. After this he strikes it a second time, by which he beats out all the bones; and, at the third and last stroke, reduces the whole carcase to ashes. After he has thus accomplished his work, the Jews imagine, that the good angels re-unite the parts, and re-place the body in the grave.

(*o*) Spirit, in Hebrew (*Ruach*) in Greek (*Pneuma*) and in Latin (*Spiritus*) is, in scripture, sometimes

18 The DIVINE ORATOR; or,

be enabled to follow his shining example, and continue patient in well-doing, without the least wavering or deviation, whilst we live here, in order to our attainment of an uninterrupted felicity hereafter !

taken for the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the ever-blessed Trinity, who inspired the prophets, animates good men, pours his grace into our hearts, imparts to us light and comfort, in whose name we are baptized, as well as in those of the Father and the Son ; that enlivening Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and Son. *Matth. iii. 16. John iii. 8. xv. 26. Luke iii. 22. Acts ii. 3, &c.* And thus it is to be understood here.

Beatitude

BEATITUDE the First.

The TEXT according to St. MATTHEW.

CHAP. V. ver. 3.

I Blessed are the poor in spirit ; for theirs
is the kingdom of Heaven.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

Blessed be ye poor ; for yours is the kingdom
of God.—LUKE vi. 20.

Better it is to be of an humble spirit with
the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the
proud.—PROVERBS xvi. 19.

A man's pride shall bring him low ; but ho-
nour shall uphold the humble in spirit.

PROVERBS xxix. 23.

For thus saith the high and lofty one, that
inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy : I
dwell in the high and holy place : with him
also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to

20 The DIVINE ORATOR; or,

revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.—ISA. lvii. 23.

To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my word.—ISAIAH lxvi. 2.

Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of Heaven.—MATTHEW xix. 14.

A familiar PARAPHRASE of the Third
VERSE of the TEXT.

BLessed are all such as are of an humble and docile temper, accompanied with a love to truth; such as are ready and willing, at all times, chearfully to embrace it on their first conviction; such as, in short, value and regard it infinitely beyond all the pomps and vanities that this world can produce; and, for the sake of it, are prepared (without the least reluctance or reserve) to resign every present worldly enjoyment: blessed are all such, I say, as have that humble and teachable frame of mind, as is absolutely requisite to introduce them into the kingdom of the Messiah in this world, and secure to them an ever-blessed and everlasting establish-

establishment in the kingdom of Heaven in the world to come.

Occasional REFLECTIONS on the preceding VERSE.

THere are several articles in this first benediction well-worthy of the christian's notice. And, in the first place, we must observe, that the blessing is not pronounced on those who are poor and despicable in the eyes of the world, who stand in need of the common necessities of life, and are destitute of all friends to encourage or support them; neither are the spiritually poor entituled to the blessing; for such as are destitute of the grace and (*p*) spirit of (*q*) Christ; such as have no sense of their spiritual

(*p*) Spirit, in this place, signifies a spirit of grace, wisdom and understanding.

(*q*) Christ, a Greek term, which signifies (anointed) and answers to the Hebrew word Messiah. This is the name attributed by the Hebrews to that Saviour and Deliverer, whom they expected, and was promised to them by all the prophets. As the holy unction was given to kings, priests, and prophets, by representing the promised Saviour of the world under the name of the Anointed; or the Messiah, it was sufficiently evidenced, that the

spiritual wants are spiritually poor indeed ; but not poor in spirit : neither has the low and mean-spirited man ; he, who acts beneath the dignity or character of a man, or a christian, any title to the above benediction ; neither has he any share therein, who makes himself voluntarily poor ; who enthusiastically resigns all his worldly effects to the church, (as some blind bigotted papists do) in order to assume the hypocritical character of a religious (r) mendicant ; no ; the benediction descends on those only whom the gospel makes poor, by giving them an insight into their spiritual wants and necessities, and by directing them to the blessed Jesus, who alone is able to make them rich unto salvation : none, to conclude, but those who are truly humble and poor in spirit, have any real right or title to the kingdom of Heaven.

the qualities of king, priest, and prophet, would all eminently meet in him, and that he should exercise them, not only over the Jews, but over all mankind ; and in a particular manner over all those who should believe in him, and acknowledge him for their Saviour, their King, their Priest, and their Prophet.

(r) Mendicant, a begging monk or fryar amongst the roman catholics.

IMPROVEMENT.

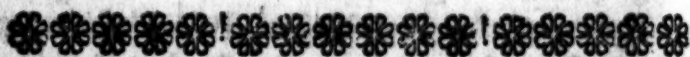
Since then a docile temper is the first step towards our becoming true christians; since this teachable frame of mind is absolutely requisite, in order to procure us the favour of the Almighty, and to gain us admittance among the disciples of the ever-blessed Jesus; since an high esteem for truth, and a steady adherence to her in every circumstance of life, are the only methods prescribed for our attainment of eternal felicity; how careful ought we to be, to guard ourselves, on the one hand, against an inordinate love and affection for the grandeur and pleasures of a wicked world; and, on the other, against the unmanly dread of any casual evils that may possibly surround us! If we are possessed of the former, they are fleeting and transitory; and if the latter befall us, however dismal the prospect, it is the path prescribed us to our safe arrival at the (s) New Jerusalem. Let, therefore, no terrors of the world affright us; but let our adherence to truth be steady

(s) New Jerusalem, a scripture term, signifying the kingdom of Heaven; or those mansions of bliss which are prepared for the everlasting habitations of the righteous.

and

24 The DIVINE ORATOR; or,

and sincere; for truth is above all, and must be sought with unwearied diligence and application; since all those who find her may be well assured, that she will infallibly crown their constancy and perseverance with everlasting happiness.



BEATITUDE the Second.

The TEXT, according to St. MATTHEW.

C H A P. V. ver. 4.

4 Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

The Lord hath anointed me—to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes; the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.—ISAIAH lxi. 1, 3.

Blessed

Blessed are ye that weep now : for ye shall laugh.—LUKE vi. 21.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.—JOHN xvi. 20.

Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.—2 COR. i. 4.

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation : for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.—JAMES i. 12.

God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.—REV. vii. 17.

A familiar PARAPHRASE of the Fourth
VERSE of the TEXT.

BLESSED are all those, who, from a sincere sorrow and contrition for their past errors and offences, forsake them with the utmost abhorrence and detestation.—Blessed likewise

26 The DIVINE ORATOR; or,

wise are all such as are overwhelmed with sorrows and afflictions; such as stand in need, not only of the conveniencies, but the common necessities of life; and yet bear them all with christian patience, and a perfect resignation to the divine will: for all such as are of this sober and serious disposition, who never aim at extricating themselves either out of their agonizing pains, or worldly misfortunes in which they are involved, though ever so deep, by any ways or means that are indirect, criminal, or unjustifiable, but wait with submission the Almighty's time for their relief, shall most assuredly, before it be long, be delivered from all the calamities they labour under; shall be comforted, and amply recompenced by the tokens of God's forgiving love; and, in a word, be refreshed, beyond their most sanguine expectations, with the reviving rays of his everlasting favour and affection.

Occasional REFLECTIONS on the two preceding VERSES.

IN this text, there are three articles worthy of our observation; namely, first, that a sincere contrition and sorrow, or mourning for our sins, is entirely a gospel-duty; for the law admits

admits of no place for repentance, though ever so diligently sought for, and with the utmost humiliation: secondly, that now, the present time, is the only season for the due performance of this important duty; for whilst we are living, repentance is an invaluable grace; but if deferred till after death, it will be an inexpressible, an everlasting punishment. And lastly, that a godly sorrow for our manifold sins and iniquities, in this world, will prove our ineffable comfort and consolation in that which is to come.

IMPROVEMENT.

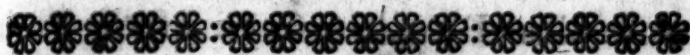
How amiable is the christian constitution, which, in every branch of it, is adapted to our necessities, and in such a way, as is altogether worthy of its divine author! The contents of it are nothing less than the pardon and forgiveness of a wicked world, than the restoration of fallen man to that God whom he has so highly offended. And on what easy, what compassionate terms is this happy reconciliation procured? Nothing more is required, than a sincere mourning for our past transgressions, and a pious resolution to forsake all such indirect courses, as will unavoidably lead us into future misery and perdition. Upon these kind,

these tender and indulgent conditions, our pardon is proclaimed by the only-begotten son of God. That most beneficent and affectionate Being, whose bosom glows with all his Father's goodness, hath openly pronounced the sincere mourner for his sins, to be intitled to everlasting bliss, and the man of a broken spirit and contrite heart, to be the sure object of comfort and consolation.

Encouraged then by such a profusion of goodness, let us take up arms against our trespasses and sins; let our former transgressions be our future aversion and abhorrence. Let us consider, that nothing but our sins and iniquities, unrepented of, can deprive us of the favour and loving-kindness of the Almighty, or cause us to shudder and tremble at our appearance before him; that nothing but our inordinate and unruly passions can make us fly from the presence of the Lord, from whom all our felicity is derived, and whose approbation is our sovereign good.

Let us awake then to righteousness, and resolve never to offend so beneficent, so gracious, and so good a God any more; since a genuine sorrow for our past offences, and a renewed obedience for the time to come, are incontestible

ble demonstrations of the truly penitent and sincere christian.



BEATITUDE the Third.

The TEXT according to St. MATTHEW.

C H A P. V. ver. 5.

5 Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised by the people.—PSAL. xxii. 6.

He will beautify the meek with salvation.

PSALM cxlix. 4.

The meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

PSALM xxxvii. 11.

The promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed,

30 The DIVINE ORATOR; or,

through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.—ROM. iv. 13.

A familiar PARAPHRASE of the Fifth
VERSE of the TEXT.

BLESSED likewise are all such as are of an inoffensive, harmless, and peaceable frame of mind; who, by their gentle and mild deportment, testify, not only how cautious they are of offering any injury or provocation to their neighbours; but, with what patience and moderation they are ready, not only to bear, but forgive any insults, or acts of injustice, that they meet with from others; for these happy men shall weather many a storm, shall conquer many a difficulty, which would be apt to bear down and over-power such as are of an obstinate and rugged disposition; and, in the end, these happy men shall inherit “the earth (as the psalmist expresseth it) and “delight themselves in the abundance of “peace,” which can no where have its seat, but in the bosoms of the meek and lowly.

The promise that he should be the heir of
was not to Abraham, or to his seed, but
through

Occasional

Occasional REFLECTIONS on the preceding VERSE.

HERE we find, not only the grace and duty of meekness recommended; but the important benefits and advantages, the wages and rewards, that arise from the exercise and practice of that particular grace and duty; namely, the inheritance of the earth; or, in other terms, the meek man shall not only in general be secured in the quiet possession of what providence has allotted him here, but he shall be admitted into that new earth, which shall take place when this wicked world shall be no more; and in that new earth, shall dwell in love and peace for ever and ever.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us reflect here on this most amiable frame of mind; on account whereof, the man, who is so happy as to have the possession of it, is pronounced by our Lord and Saviour, the Son of God himself, to be one amongst the number of the blessed. Let us consider, that the practice of this mild, this gentle disposition, is what directly tends, not only to make us perfectly easy and contented here, but eternally

32 The DIVINE ORATOR; or,

happy hereafter. Who is there so savage and inhuman, as not to be charmed with him, who is so happily possessed of this virtue of meekness and serenity of mind? Who can ever be tempted to injure and oppress the inoffensive man? What wretch is there so abandoned, as to injure his neighbour, because he scorns to be guilty of the least act of injustice, and return an insult, though received; and because he very well knows, that he industriously withdraws from all strife and contention?

This happy frame of mind unites mankind in its defence, and gives us all the security, all the assurance imaginable, of a calm and serene passage through a world of anxieties and cares, that the nature of all sublunary enjoyments will admit of, whilst the happy possessor of this virtue enjoys such solid peace, such tranquility within himself, as is superior by far to all the pomp and parade of worldly grandeur.

Though this is the natural tendency of so amiable a virtue, as it stands connected with this our present transitory state and condition; yet the Lord and giver of life has been pleased to extend the view, and has greatly heightened the glorious scene.

Our

Our blessed Lord, who has restored life and immortality to man, has opened to us a much more durable state, where righteousness and peace shall dwell for ever and ever.

This our heavenly preacher has assured the meek and lowly, that they shall be possessed of a more firm and permanent abode, a more continued city, not made with hands, when this their earthly habitation shall be totally dissolved; and the proud, the insolent, and contentious, shall all be reduced to dust and ashes.

Encouraged by so delightful a prospect, let us guard against our unruly passions; let us restrain our inordinate affections, and root out every turbulent and fretful thought; let anger and resentment have no place in our bosoms, in order, when that new world shall make its appearance, wherein nothing that can possibly give offence shall ever be permitted to enter, we may have an abundant entrance, and an exalted station, in those mansions above, those happy realms of everlasting love and peace.

BEATITUDE the Fourth.

The TEXT, according to St. MATTHEW.

C H A P. V. ver. 6.

6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

Ho! every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye buy and eat.—ISAIAH lv. 1.

Thus saith the Lord God, behold! my servants shall eat; but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink; but ye shall be thirsty.—ISAIAH lxxv. 13.

As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness.—PSALM xvii. 15.

I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.—JOHN vi. 35.

A fam

A familiar PARAPHRASE of the preceding
VERSE of the TEXT.

BLESSED are all such as make it the whole business and employment of their lives to improve themselves in every branch of virtue and goodness ; thrice happy are all those, who, instead of insatiably thirsting after the possessions of others, and aiming to obtain them, either by open violence or secret treachery and deceit, perpetually do to all men, out of a pious sense of their duty to God, as they would have others do to them : for all such shall never meet with any disappointments in their honest and praise-worthy pursuits ; but, by the goodness and favour of the Almighty, shall be assisted with sufficient means for the attainment of the habits of righteousness in this world ; and, by having those righteous habits perfected and compleated, shall be duly qualified for the most exalted stations in that which is to come.

OCCASIONAL REFLECTIONS on the two
preceding VERSES.

IN this beatitude, we are to observe, not only the character of the persons whom our blessed Lord pronounces happy, but in what their happiness likewise doth consist. We are here assured,

36 The DIVINE ORATOR; or,

assured, that such as hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled. By righteousness in this place, we are to understand that of justification; that of the mediator imputed to us by which, being freed from condemnation, we stand righteous in the sight of God. And we are further to understand by it, a righteousness of sanctification, wrought in us by the Holy Spirit. By the former, there is a relative change, or alteration, in our state and condition; and by the latter, a real one in our constitution.

From this declaration of our blessed Saviour we are further exhorted to take notice, that those only are in a perfectly happy and blessed state and condition, that do spiritually hunger and thirst after him and his holiness; that hunger and thirst after holiness, is to be truly apprehensive of the worth and excellency of it, to be as sensible of the want of it, and as solicitous in our endeavours to obtain it, as men who are pinched with hunger, and parched with thirst, naturally seek after their daily bread, and other necessary refreshments.

IMPROVEMENT.

What is it that we require with the utmost earnestness from our neighbour? On what conditions do we desire a social intercourse with him? No more than this, that he should religiously prove true to his word; that he should be strictly just and honest in all his dealings, and faithful to the trust reposed in him. These are the strong bands of society; these the surement of friendship. Without these, universal mistrust and diffidence would prevail, confusion and disorder would take place, and, prompted by restless and uncontrouled desires, the whole race of mankind would become a perfect band of infernals.

If then we are fully convinced of these important truths, let us make a well regulated, a temper of mind our perpetual care. Let us endeavour to cultivate this happy disposition with as much diligence and application, as we should seek for our daily food; a disposition, which is so reasonable in itself, and which we, moreover, faithfully promised, that we will be possessed of it in the highest degree, we will but seek after it with sincerity and

Warmed

Warned by so gracious a declaration from the Son of God himself, let us awake all our powers; be above all present allurements, and oppose, with all our might, every private view every partial desire. Let no temptation be able to break in upon our truth and integrity; let no prospect of advantage induce us to be dishonest in our dealings.

Let us argue with ourselves fairly, and in the following reasonable manner: Are we a part of the human species, and shall anything whatever prompt us to break through the laws and ties of humanity? Shall we be tempted to be deceitful and treacherous ourselves, when we would treat others, upon an detected fraud, with the utmost abhorrence and contempt? If we think ourselves, as we most certainly must, accountable to God for all our transactions, shall we presume to violate the very first law of our frame and constitution which must unavoidably expose us to the severest punishment? Do we call ourselves christians, and has our blessed Saviour promised such a glorious reward; and shall we think the utmost industry and application too great for the acquisition of a virtue, which is so highly

requisite ; a virtue, in short, whereon the happiness of the whole race of mankind does entirely depend ?

Let us look down with an eye of contempt on the vain and perishing pleasures of unrighteousness, which will most assuredly end in everlasting shame ; but let us hunger and thirst after righteousness ; since we are assured, that the upright man, the man of unaffected piety, and sanctity of manners, shall be filled ; or, in other terms, shall be for ever blessed ; shall be crowned in the day of retribution ; and shall then lift up his head with such joys, as are not by words to be expressed, and there shall no one be able to make him afraid.

F **BEATITUDE**

BEATITUDE the Fifth.

The TEXT according to St. MATTHEW.

CHAP. V. ver. 7.

7 Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

When ye stand, praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any, that your Father also which is in Heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

MARK xi. 2.

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

MATT. vi. 1.

The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain.—2 TIM. i. 16.

For he shall have judgment without mercy that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy joiceth against judgment.—JAMES ii. 13.

He (i. e. the righteous man) is ever merciful, and lendeth ; and his seed is blessed.

PSALM xxxvii. 26.

Blessed is he that considereth the poor ; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.

PSALM xli. 1.

He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.—PROVERBS xiv. 21.

A familiar PARAPHRASE of the Seventh
VERSE of the TEXT.

HAPPY, thrice happy, are all such as are of a compassionate and tender-hearted temper, who feel the sorrows of others as their own, and with an indulgent sympathy hasten to relieve them ; who likewise heartily forgive their fellow-creatures, though they receive injuries at their hands. By such a forgiving disposition, they shall obtain that mercy from God, which the best and happiest of mankind stand in need of, and on which they wholly and constantly depend.

F

Occasional

Occasional REFLECTIONS on the preceding VERSE.

HERE our blessed Redeemer recommends to us a compassionate regard for the miseries and afflictions of our fellow-creatures, and that likewise, both in soul and body, name and estate, he exhorts us to be forward, that is, always ready and willing to pity and pardon, to relieve and assist, to give freely and be free in forgiving; and as an encouragement he assures us, that as we exert our benevolence and shew a tender concern for the misfortune of other men, his Father, who is in Heaven will look down with an eye of pity and compassion on them. Our charity towards them shall be crowned with mercy and loving-kindness from God, and that in abundance; for our rivulet, our little stream of affection, will shall partake of a whole flood of mercy; we shall moreover obtain it, at a time when we want it most, and are most eager and solicitous of procuring it.

IMPROVEMENT.

If we will but seriously reflect on our circumstances in life, and that station in which

provi

providence has placed us, be it higher or lower, what can appear more amiable than the precept here prescribed us?

If we will but seriously reflect on the numberless unforeseen misfortunes to which we are daily exposed, from which no affluence of fortune can possibly secure us; if we will but consider what various aids and assistances we stand in need of from our fellow-creatures, with whom the very frame of our frail bodies so closely unites us; if we will but recollect, that the summer's heat and the winter's chilly frosts both equally affect us, and how liable we are to like to thirst and hunger, immoderate grief, agonizing pain; what can be more delectable in the natural and moral world, than our mutual assistance of one another, and our joint concurrence against the common calamities of life? If we possess a larger portion of the good things, the temporal advantages, of this our precarious state, than some others who are less fortunate than ourselves; what better use can we make of those indulgences of providence, than the relief of our distressed neighbours? What sensual gratifications can warm our minds, and fill them with such pure lasting pleasures, as the sight of a poor brother's soul

44 The DIVINE ORATOR; or,

dissolving in grateful tears, for being raised by our trivial benefaction, from the very depth of sorrow to extasy and bliss? How strongly are we called upon by our blessed Lord himself to the practice of this most amiable virtue? And what assurances has he given us of the rewards annexed thereto? Has he not promised us, and we may safely rely on his veracity, that every act of kindness shewn to the desolate and distressed, whether it be cloathing the naked, feeding the hungry, or the giving only a cup of cold water, in the name of a christian, to him that is a thirst, shall entitle us to that happy sentence, “Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you?”

If we find ourselves very imperfect, very faulty creatures, liable to a thousand errors and influenced by our strong and unruly appetites, which are too apt to hurt and misguide us; shall we then presume to be over-censorious of our weak brethren? If we expect to meet with the most candid allowances to be made for our own misconduct, shall we aggravate the failings of others, of whose strong temptations or unhappy ignorances, we are improper judges. Our very frail composition, doubtless, forbid

and ought to give a check to our too partial censures; nay, what is still more, humanity itself commands the suppression of them. Were our views to extend no farther; yet the common infirmities, incident to our frail natures, point out that forbearance which we should exercise one towards another.

The prospect, however, opens; and our future interest is manifestly blended with our present. Let us listen with attention to the words of our blessed Saviour. "As ye judge, says he, so shall ye be judged; the same measure with which ye mete, shall be measured to you again; if ye will not forgive your brother his hundred pence, the ten thousand talents that ye owe shall not be forgiven; but if ye will remit your brother his few and small offences against you, then shall your very many and great offences against God be also remitted."

If now we are fully convinced, that, on our compliance with this most equitable command, our trespasses shall be forgiven, and ourselves assured of the favour of the Almighty, shall we not call forth all our powers, that we may be and for ever observant of this most gracious function?

Shall

46 The DIVINE ORATOR; or,

Shall the only-begotten Son of God, the express image of his Father, this sinless, this most excellent person descend from Heaven, from those realms of everlasting glory and bliss, and, for our sakes, assume the human nature, and become exposed to all the manifold infirmities and sorrows that attend this our human state; and shall we be wanting in our friendly aid and assistance to any of our helpless and distressed brethren?

Shall the prince of peace, shall the great judge of all the earth, make all the kind concessions imaginable for the sinful and faulty race of mankind, of whom we are a part; and shall we presume, with an high hand, and in an imperious tone, to judge and pass sentence on our weak brethren, and by that means draw down the vengeance of Heaven on our devoted heads, and ascertain our own judgment?

Let all of us then be guarded against a merciless and censorious disposition, and by our incessant practice of benevolence and forgiveness, acquire those amiable and praise-worthy habits, without which we shall be for ever excluded from the kingdom of our dear Redeemer.

BEATITUDE

BEATITUDE the Sixth.

The TEXT according to St. MATTHEW.

C H A P. V. ver. 8.

Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart, shall dwell, O Lord, in thy holy hill.—

PSALM xv. 2. As shall likewise,

He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart, and hath not lift up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.—PSALM xxiv. 4.

Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face.—I COR. xiii. 12.

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

HEB. xii. 14.

We shall see him as he is.—I JOHN iii. 2.

A fami-

A familiar PARAPHRASE of the Eighth
VERSE of the TEXT.

THREE happy are all those who are free from all hypocrisy and uncleanness; who avoid every irregular desire, and mortify every unruly passion; this resolute, this pious, this worthy self-denial, shall be the source or fountain of more solid and substantial, as well as more lasting pleasures: "for they shall see God;" or, in other terms, when they are thus refined and purified, God will manifest himself to them in the clearest light: they shall enjoy him in his holy ordinances here; and be made partakers hereafter of those rivers of pleasures which flow at his right-hand for ever and ever.

Occasional REFLECTIONS on the preceding
VERSE.

THERE are two articles in this verse well worthy of every true christian's notice: first, the duty insisted on, and peremptorily required; namely, a purity both of heart and life, the former directly expressed, and the other naturally implied; for an heart, without guile or deceit, without the least mixture

self-interest or hypocrisy, will infallibly be attended with a virtuous and blameless course of life; where there is a principle of grace within, there will be the visible actings of a good conscience, void of offence towards God and towards man; and in the next place, there is the motive or inducement to the constant practice of this duty; the pure in heart, and such as are truly pious, without the least affectation, shall not only see but enjoy God, that infinitely pure, that perfectly holy and supreme Being; they shall have a mediate and spiritual sight of him in this life, and an absolute and uninterrupted enjoyment of him in that which is to come.

IMPROVEMENT.

How excellent must that religion be, which has an immediate tendency towards the spiritualizing of our natures, and taking us off from those temporal enjoyments, which are but transient and momentary, and substituting in their stead the laudable habits of virtue as well as reason, which of necessity elevate our purity of mind and sanctity of manners to the highest dignity and degree, and render it capable of an eternal enjoyment of that one great and sovereign Lord of all “in whose presence there is
“fulness

“fulness of joy, and at whose right-hand there
“are pleasures for evermore.”

And such, we may depend upon it, is the christian religion; a religion, which is perfectly spiritual, and which affects our very hearts: the calls whereof have a natural tendency towards the improvement of our minds, and of every faculty which we enjoy; towards our acquisition of such habits, as terminate in joy and peace; and such more particularly is the enjoyment which our blessed Saviour has here so pathetically laid before us.

What is it that our souls pant so eagerly after; what is it that they so earnestly crave their sovereign good; but the happy admittance into the presence of the Almighty, and the approbation of him, who is the righteous governor and Lord of the whole universe?

This is the way, this is the path marked out by our divine Preacher, by the Son of God himself, under this veil of flesh, who was sent down from Heaven by his Father to point out everlasting bliss and immortality to the whole race of mankind; and what is it that this our wise instructor requires of us, but that we exert all those faculties and powers with which

has endowed us, to the utmost degree; that we examine ourselves with truth and sincerity, and form a right judgment of ourselves with the utmost impartiality, in order that we may be absolutely freed from the unmerciful tyranny of our inordinate affections and unruly appetites; that we may be happily delivered from every false bias, which may cause us to deviate from our true interest and indispensable duty; that we should attain to such a purity of life, such an unaffected piety, as may render us not only blameless in action, but even spotless and undefiled in thought, that may clear us in a word, from every spot and blemish arising from baseness and deceit, and preserve us from being allured by the pomps and vanities of a wicked and deceitful world? Let us then oppose, with all our might, a carnal life; let us subdue, as far as in us lies, all the lusts of the flesh, and turn a deaf ear to all its delusive enchantments; let us boast, that we have in view an happiness that is as everlasting and as permanent as its beneficent donor; let us shew our intrepidity, that notwithstanding this world should be dissolved, and the Heavens should melt with fervent heat, no vicissitude, no alteration, how great soever, should give the least shock to our faith, or any ways interrupt the felicity of our

52 THE DIVINE ORATOR; or,

pure and unspotted minds. † If we will but arise to the battle, and engage all our powers in the most glorious warfare, Heaven itself will support us in our pursuit of so good a cause, and the fruition of our God will prove an ample recompence and reward for all our warm conflicts.



BEATITUDE the Seventh

The TEXT, according to St. MATTHEW

C H A P. V. ver. 9.

- 9 Blessed are the peace makers ; for they shall be called the children of God.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

1 COR. xiv. 33.

Live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.—2 COR. xiii. 11.

And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet.—ROM. xvi. 20.

A familiar PARAPHRASE of the Ninth
VERSE of the TEXT.

THREE happy are all those, who not only avoid contention, but use their utmost endeavours to extinguish it wherever it prevails: There are some mistaken turbulent men, who imagine, that the doctrines of their most holy religion would best be propagated by the dint of the sword; and that a fondness for peace and tranquility, is a certain mark of cowardice and meanness of spirit; but, if my declaration will carry any weight with you, I pronounce those who are peace-makers, not only happy, but for their encouragement, assure them, that they shall have the honour to be called the children of the God of peace, and be acknowledged by him in that dear relation, as having that happy frame and temper of mind, that renders them most like to him, and consequently, most acceptable in his sight.

Occasional REFLECTIONS on the preceding
V E R S E.

THERE are in this verse, three articles that demand the reader's attention. In the first place, he should observe the close connexion there is between peace and purity of heart; for they are inseparable companions. There is no internal purity, where there is no endeavour after external peace.

In the next, he is to take peculiar notice of the exhortation here made use of; namely, not only to love peace, but to labour after it; not only to love it himself, but to promote it, as much as in his power lies, amongst his neighbours; not only, in a word, to be peaceable and quiet, but to be a peace-maker. And lastly, every true christian ought to consider the high title of honour and dignity, which is here conferred on all such as are of this amiable, this peaceable, and peace-making frame and disposition of mind; namely, they shall be called the children of God; that is to say, they shall be reputed and esteemed God's children, on account of their resemblance to him, who is the God of peace. And these, moreover, shall be honoured and dignified with all the privi-
lege

leges of the Sons of God, viz. Grace here, and glory hereafter.

IMPROVEMENT.

In How beautiful is the peace-maker ! and how amiable the man, who makes it his peculiar pleasure and study to reconcile his neighbours, when he observes the least seeds of contention arising amongst them ! But who is our neighbour ? Why, the answer, doubtless, is easily made ; namely, every individual person of the human species, to whom we stand related, as we are all the sons of Adam ; and by this tie, this bond, or obligation, we are indebted to him all the assistance we ourselves could wish from him, did we stand in need of his aid or support. And by this injunction of our blessed Saviour now particularly before us, we are in duty bound to view all mankind with affection and indulgence ; to look upon them with an eye of pity and compassion, and throw a friendly veil over their failings ; to give a check to the very first appearance of anger and resentment in the mind ; to root envy and malice out of the heart ; to reconcile, if possible, such of our neighbours as are quarrelsome, or litigious ; and to form their minds to social love and kindness ; to calm all those who are ruffled and discom-

posed in thought ; and, in a word, to restore peace and tranquillity to the breasts of all such as are restless and uneasy.

This is so amiable a frame and temper of mind, that, like virtue, it is its own reward : it gives a man that solid and substantial joy, and enables him to possess that true and lasting serenity of mind, that happiness, which no external evil can deprive him of. This happy disposition proves a blessing to itself, whilst, at the same time, it contributes towards another's felicity and welfare.

These are its genuine fruits, indeed, and such as arise from its very nature ; but the principles of our most holy religion heighten the view, and render the scene more striking and glorious.

The song of that angelic host, who introduced our blessed Saviour into the world, was very short, indeed ; but very comprehensive ; namely, " peace and good-will to mankind."

The kind injunction of the Prince of peace to his disciples and auditors here, is, we find couched in the same terms, " peace and good-will to men. And, in short,

" Peace

“Peace and good-will to the whole race of mankind,” is not only the breathing of the christian constitution, but the great foundation of our future felicity, which takes its rise from the God and Father of us all. Whilst we are using our utmost endeavours to promote unity, peace and concord, amongst all such as we have any intercourse with, we are imitating him, who is the fountain of all goodness. By this peaceable deportment, we become disciples of our blessed Lord, the followers of the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, and have a just title to the glorious character of the children of the God of peace.

Let us now address our own souls, and ask them, what influence, what powers or effect, has this most gracious declaration on them? Shall then malice or hatred ever find a place in our bosoms; or shall passion or resentment ever have the least dominion over us? Doubtless, no! we will caress, we will embrace this heavenly disposition: this amiable virtue shall sit triumphant in our breasts; our hearts shall be open to receive it; henceforth, love to our fellow-creatures in general shall be the governing principle of all our actions.

BEATITUDE the Eighth.

The TEXTS according to St. MATTHEW.

CHAP. V. ver. 10, 11, 12.

10 Blessed are they which are persecuted
for righteousness sake; for theirs is the
kingdom of Heaven.

11 Blessed are ye when men shall revile
you, and persecute you, and shall say
all manner of evil against you falsely
for my sake,

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for
great is your reward in Heaven; for
so persecuted they the prophets which
were before you.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

If we suffer, we shall also reign with him
if we deny him, he also will deny us.

2 TIM. iii. 1

But, and if ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye; and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled.—1 PETER iii. 14.

Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.

LUKE vi. 22.

If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part, he is evil spoken of; but on your part, he is glorified.

1 PETER iv. 14.

False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not.

PSALMS xxxv. 11.

John the baptist came neither eating bread, nor drinking wine; and ye say he hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, behold a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.

LUKE vii. 33, 34.

My brethren, count it all joy, when ye fall to divers temptations.—JAMES i. 2.

They

They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

ACTS v. 41.

We glory in tribulations.—ROM. v. 3.

Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted! and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the just One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers.—ACTS vii. 52.

A familiar PARAPHRASE of the Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth VERSES of the TEXT.

10. **H**APPY are they, who courageously bear up under the greatest and most heavy afflictions; who suffer a thousand indignities and insults from cruel and inhuman wretches, for the testimony of a good conscience, and the favour of the Almighty; their richest treasures are beyond the reach of their most implacable enemies. As they have given the strongest evidence of their sincere love and reverential regard for their Father who is in Heaven, and of their ready obedience and sub-

mission

mission to his divine will, the kingdom of Heaven shall be theirs, and they shall reign with God in everlasting glory.

11. And of this eminent glory and dignity, which shall accompany all those who become patient sufferers on account of their well-doing, I embrace this opportunity of informing you, my faithful friends and sincere disciples, whom I have made choice of for acting more immediately under me, in order to propagate my gospel, and spread my doctrines all over the habitable world, that you must, because of your professed relation to me, expect the very worst of treatment from the rage and malice of wicked men, who will, without the least regard to honour or justice, revile and abuse you, for opposing their carnal lusts and worldly interests, against which my doctrines are so openly and so directly levelled: I exhort and beseech you, therefore, in a more particular manner than any others, that when you meet with such unjust and cruel treatment from yours and my most inveterate enemies.

12. Triumph with joy unspeakable for being so inhumanly persecuted and spoken so evil of, for my sake; never be discouraged under all this load of infamy and reproach, but rather be trans-

transported with joy, because your reward hereafter will be proportionably great; for, in all ages, this hath been the lot of the most eminent saints. And you, my sincere friends and faithful followers, are highly sensible, from the sacred records, that it was with the same malignity of spirit that the Jews persecuted the prophets of their own nation, who lived many years before you were born, though the immediate ambassadors of God to them to prevail on them, if possible, to repent; and by a sincere sorrow and contrition for their flagrant sins and iniquities, to save their souls from everlasting perdition; and as you are now partakers of the same tribulation, which they in old time underwent with patience and resignation to the divine will; so you shall, e'er it be long (as the just reward of your long sufferings for my sake) be partakers of those ineffable glories which they now enjoy, and will enjoy without the least impediment or interruption.

Occasional REFLECTIONS on the preceding ing VERSES.

IN this last beatitude, there are five articles well worthy of the most sincere christian's daily recollection; namely,

First, That all the disciples and followers of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ must expect to suffer persecution in this world, tho' their deportment amongst their fellow-creatures prove ever so blameless and inoffensive.

Secondly, That the most implacable malice and revenge of the vulgar, the sharpest edge of the sword, and the most relentless persecution of the sons of Belial, is, for the generality, turned against the poor deserving protestant clergy, and falls heaviest on those who alone are termed the prophets of God, or the express messengers of the Almighty.

Thirdly, That such severe afflictions, such unnatural persecutions, as will afford the upright man the most solid consolation, and enable him to eternal happiness hereafter, must be borne with meekness and patience, for righteousness sake, and with an entire resignation to the divine will.

Fourthly, That it is the positive command of our blessed Lord, and an indispensable duty incumbent on all such as profess themselves members of his church, not only to be humble and patient, but to be cheerful likewise, and forgive the insults they meet with from an

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ungrateful world. And lastly, that all Christ's favourite disciples are to reflect with joy, and transport, on their trials and temptations in this life; because, as their persecutions arise on his account, they will inevitably be rewarded with the fruition of those blessings, which are reserved for the righteous in that which is to come.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us now seriously reflect on what we are doing, and what obligations we are laying ourselves under, when we publicly declare ourselves to be professors of those doctrines which our Lord and Saviour, and his apostles after him, took such pains to propagate and establish. Let us reflect on that station which we are in, and what insults and injuries we are like to sustain, on account of such profession. Let us weigh well the importance of those manifold trials we are likely to undergo, whilst we embrace such tenets as are directly repugnant to, and thwart the inordinate passions and unrulely lusts of wicked men.

Let us likewise consider, however, with ourselves, whether a life of indolence and ease, entirely free from the reproaches and persecu-

tions of those sons of violence and oppression, is to be preferred to a conscience, void of offence towards God, and towards man ; or the gratification of ourselves, in the enjoyment of any sensual and illicit pleasure, is to be more highly esteemed than the approbation of him, whose eyes are every where, and can pry into the most secret recesses of our hearts. Is the wrath of man to be dreaded more than the displeasure of him who created us, and in whom only we live, move, and have our beings ! Is the calumny, the scandal, or the menaces of the most merciless tyrants, to be avoided with more precaution, than that most tremendous sentence of an omnipotent judge, Go ye cursed, into everlasting fire ? and shall we resign all our pleasing hopes and expectations of an eternal and ever-blessed inheritance in the kingdom of Heaven for the cowardly dread of a few momentary tortures, inflicted on us by the most implacable persecutors, whose lives are as precarious as our own ?

Let us seek then, with unwearied diligence, the approbation and favour of that God above all, who is the creator and all-wise director of the universe ; from whom we derive all those blessings which we enjoy ; whose positive sta-

tures and commandments we are indispensably obliged to obey; who has the most undoubted right to our submission; who requires from all his rational and intelligent creatures sincerity of heart; and will in no wise acquit him, who only worships him out of fear, and acts the part of an hypocrite, whom he abhors; and who permits us to undergo some severe trials in this world, with no other view, than to promote and advance us to inexpressible honours and glories in the world to come.

If then this short, this imperfect life be only a state of probation; if we are planted here for the trial only of our obedience and submission to the divine will; if, with that principal view, we are surrounded with a thousand difficulties and distresses; if the human race can be really happy in no other than a future state, a state of immortality; how resolutely then ought we to press on, in this glorious trial; with what contempt should we look down upon those temporary inconveniences to which we are thus daily exposed, since the glories of an immortal state are laid open to our view! and was the discovery to close here, who would once hesitate where to fix his choice?

Our blessed Saviour, however, our most indulgent instructor, has heightened those glories with our duty; when he invites us to suffer for his sake, he enlarges the reward; and he who cannot lye, and on whose veracity we may safely depend, has told us, that the persecutions which we undergo for his righteousness make call for the most extatic triumphs of joy and rejoicing, as being the sure, the unerring path to the highest glory and preferment.

Let us then boldly avow the cause of truth; let us never murmur or repine at the evils we may be exposed to for the vindication of so glorious a cause; let us ever remember, that this is a state of warfare we are engaged in; but that our cause is not only good, but glorious; and that all who are concerned with us, are more than heroes. The prophets and apostles were gone before us; and the only-begotten Son of God is our great chieftain, who, in himself, hath set us the most exalted example; who being made perfect through his sufferings, and having made atonement for our sins by his most precious blood, is pronounced, and that with the highest justice, Lord over all.

Let us then, with all the chearfulness imaginable, take up the cross, and follow our good Lord and master. Let us lift up our eyes, and behold, with transport and gratitude, that crown of glory which is prepared for us, unless we shamefully retreat. Let us but press forward, and we may depend on our becoming victorious.

Let no difficulty then discourage us; for if our conflicts are great, much greater are our supports. The blessed saints and angels will applaud us; the Holy Spirit will aid and assist us, and God himself will approve of our conduct, and an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our blessed Lord and Saviour, will prove the happy issue of all our tribulations.

Our Blessed SAVIOUR'S Address to his APOSTLES.

MATTHEW V. ver. 13 to 20, inclusive.

13 Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost his savour, where with shall it be salted? it is thenceforth

good

good for nothing, but to be cast out,
and to be trodden under foot of men.

4 Ye are the light of the world; a city
that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

5 Neither do men light a candle and
put it under a bushel; but on a can-
dlestick, and it giveth light unto all
that are in the house.

6 Let your light so shine before men,
that they may see your good works,
and glorify your Father which is in
Heaven.

7 Think not that I am come to destroy
the law or the prophets: I am not
come to destroy, but to fulfil.

8 For verily I say unto you, till Heaven
and earth pass, one jot, or one tittle,
shall in no wise pass from the law, till
all be fulfilled.

9 Whosoever therefore shall break one
of these least commandments, and shall
teach

70 The DIVINE ORATOR; or,

teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven; but whosoever shall do, and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven.

20 For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven.

PARALLEL TEXTS to the eight preceding VERSES.

13 Salt is good; but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?

LUKE xiv. 34

14 The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.—PROV. iv. 18.

While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.

JOHN xii. 36

That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked

the BEAUTY of HOLINESS. 71

crooked and perverse nation, among whom
e shine as lights in the world.—PHIL. ii. 15.

15 Is a candle brought to be put under a
ushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on
candlestick?—MARK iv. 21.

No man when he hath lighted a candle, co-
ereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a
ed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they
which enter in may see the light.

LUKE viii. 16.

No man when he hath lighted a candle
etteth it in a secret place, neither under a
shel; but on a candlestick, that they which
me in may see the light.—LUKE xi. 33.

The manifestation of the Spirit is given to
ery man to profit withal.—1 COR. xii. 7.

Having your conversation honest among the
entiles; that whereas they speak against you
evil-doers, they may by your good works,
which they shall behold, glorify God in the
y of visitation.—1 PETER ii. 12.

Thus are the secrets of his heart made mani-
; and To falling down on his face, he will
rship God, and report that God is in you
a truth.—1 COR. xiv. 25.

Herein

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples.

JOHN xv.

17 The law was given by Moses; but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

JOHN i.

Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.—MATT. iii. 15.

Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.—ROM. x. 4.

Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law.

ROM. iii. 31.

18 And it is easier for Heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

LUKE xvi.

19 Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

JAMES ii.

20 Woe unto you scribes and pharisees hypocrites; for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but are within full of dead mens bones, and

uncleanness; even so, ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within, ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

MATT. xxiii. 27, 28.

Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.—ROM. ix. 31.

They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.—ROM. x. 3.

familiar PARAPHRASE of the eight preceding VERSES of the TEXT.

AND that you may be fully apprized of the characters you are to sustain; now, that I have called you to be the guides and instructors of mankind, both to form their minds, and direct their actions. And as the salt of the earth is necessary to preserve the material world from corruption; so are your instructions for the rectification of the moral world: But if salt, which is so useful and necessary for the seasoning of all other things, and loses its own acidity, it is impossible to restore

store its favour again, and it becomes good for nothing, but to be thrown away, as being altogether lifeless and insipid; so, in like manner you, who are elected, and intended to be the reformers of mankind, ought to be as circumspect as possible; ought to be peculiarly careful of your lives and conversations; lest you should unguardedly fall into sin and folly yourselves; since your state and condition will be so much the more deplorable, as there will be none to reform you: but as the dross and refuse of your fellow-creatures you will be rejected and treated with the utmost abhorrence and contempt.

14, 15, 16. And that I may more effectually animate and excite you to be as careful and industrious as possible in the punctual discharge of every duty incumbent on you, reflect with your own minds, that no one that acts rationally will light a candle, with a view only to conceal it in some obscure corner, where it cannot be seen; but will place it in the most advantageous part of the room, where it may be most conspicuous, and of most service to such as shall be seated round about it; to the same end, I have elected and appointed you to be shining lights in the world, and grand exemplars of the most unaffected piety and sancti-

of manners ; and with that indulgent view, I have endowed you with extraordinary powers, and ordained you to be spiritual lights, to enlighten mankind, that they may turn from ignorance and folly to heavenly knowledge and wisdom ; and as the employment, for which I thus qualified you, will render you as conspicuous to the eyes of the world, as a city that is built on an hill, so that all who pass by, unless they be wilfully blind, must unavoidably behold it ; so let your lives and actions be as exemplary, as possibly you can, that every person, who is in the least observant of your prudent conduct, may readily, and with all the cheerfulness imaginable, acknowledge your divine mission, and glorify the God of Heaven, not only by their submission to my laws and statutes, but by their constant practice of those precepts which are therein prescribed.

17 Nor let any one be so grossly mistaken, so shamefully weak and foolish, as to imagine, that, by his becoming one amongst the number of my disciples, he will be in the least conveyed at, or indulged, that he will be, in any the minutest article whatever, discharged from his strict obedience to the laws of nature, received by Moses, and enforced by the prophets ; or take notice, my coming into the world as a

law-giver, is so far from being with the least view or intention to weaken the religion (a) of nature, or the moral obligations which one man lies under to another, that the principal aim and design of my personal appearance here, is to fulfil all those remains of typical and positive rites which are not as yet accomplished.

18 And

(a) By the law and the prophets, mentioned in this verse of the text, are to be understood the great rules of life, delivered in the writings of Moses and the prophets, or in the Old Testament, more especially the duties of the moral, or natural law. These our blessed Lord assures us, he did not come to destroy or dissolve; it was not his design to free men from the obligation they were under to practise the moral laws of God, but to fulfil and accomplish them. This our Lord did by living up to those laws himself, and becoming thereby an example to us, by freeing them from the corrupt glosses, which the teachers among the Jews put upon them, and by expounding them in their fullest sense, and according to their just latitude, shewing, that they command not only an outward obedience, but the obedience even of the mind and thoughts.

These laws have their foundation in the reason and nature of things, and therefore their obligation will never cease. We may as well suppose that Heaven and earth should pass away, as that any of them should not be required of us.

The ceremonial law was dissolved by the coming of Christ. For the identical person being

com

18 And as there was no one part of the ceremonial law, but what was prescribed and given for very wise purposes; and either is, or shall be, you may depend on it, strictly fulfilled in every the most minute circumstance of it; so every branch of natural religion shall continue, as long as the world itself endures, in its utmost force.

19 And whoever, on the one hand, (b) shall break any of the moral precepts, those social ties, which are of perpetual force throughout

come, who was figured and represented by the rights, sacrifices, &c. they were of no farther use. The natural or moral law, however, which our Saviour has summed up in these two following short precepts; namely, "Love your God above all—" "Then love your neighbour as yourself," is as much in force, as much a rule of life at this very day as ever it was. And notwithstanding an absolute and perfect obedience is not made a condition of salvation; yet a sincere and universal obedience is absolutely requisite if we expect to be saved.

(b) The Greek term signifies to loose or dissolve. As if our blessed Lord had said; "If any man shall be so rash and presumptuous, as to free himself or others from the obligation of paying obedience to these commands of the moral law, I shall deem him unworthy of being a member of my kingdom, and I will exclude him from having any place whatever therein."

all ages, with temerity and presumption; and whoever shall either instruct or encourage others; by their advice or example, to practise the same disobedience, in open violation of my institutions, shall by such manifest contempt thereof forfeit the character of a christian, and lose his portion or share in the Messiah's kingdom: so, on the other hand, the man, whoever he be, that joins (with his faith in me as the only true Messiah) the steady practice of the moral laws, and instructs, or encourages others to the like compliance therewith, shall be publickly acknowledged to be my disciple; and I will raise him to some exalted station in my kingdom of glory.

20 Flatter not yourselves, therefore, as if you were entitled to the favour of God, by acknowledging my mission, without a strict obedience to my laws; as the scribes and pharisees do, who call themselves, after Moses, and in words only own him for their lawgiver; yet by their wilful neglect of the moral law place their religion in the observance of external rites; for except you exceed them in the practice of all moral and social duties, you shall not be admitted into my Father's heavenly mansions, but shall be absolutely, and that

for ever, excluded from the kingdom of his Messiah.

Occasional REFLECTIONS on the Eight preceding VERSES.

13. **O**UR blessed Saviour compares all christians in general, and his ministers in particular, unto salt for a two fold reason. First, because it is the nature of salt to preserve things from corruption and putrefaction, and to render them savoury and delicious to the taste. Thus the ministers of the gospel are to take uncommon pains, and use their utmost endeavours, by the purity of their doctrine, to sweeten such sinners as are putrified, in order to their becoming, in process of time, savoury, or in other terms, acceptable both to God and man; and may be kept from being corrupted with errors and false doctrine. In the next place, because salt is of a very penetrating nature, subdues the whole mass, and converts it to its own. And there is such a piercing power in the administration of God's word, that it subdues the whole man to the obedience of itself. And this is much the same, as if our Lord had said; "You are to be preachers and patterns to the world; you are appointed, on ac-

“ count of your pure doctrine and undefiled
 “ conversation, to purge the world from that
 “ corruption wherein it lies; but if you lose
 “ either soundness of doctrine, or the savour
 “ of a good conversation, as to these impor-
 “ tant ends, you will be perfectly useless, and
 “ must expect to be cast off and neglected by
 “ me, as unfavoury salt is thrown by others
 “ on a dunghill.”

14, 15, 16. Our blessed Saviour's doctrine
 is here particularly to be noticed, and the in-
 ference which he himself draws from it by way
 of application.

The doctrine delivered is this; namely, that
 christians in general, but ministers of God's
 word in particular, are the lights of the world,
 not originally indeed, but derivatively; not
 efficiently, but instrumentally. By way of
 original, Christ himself is the true and only
 light; but by way of derivation and participa-
 tion from him, his ministers are lights like-
 wise, to enlighten the world. Moreover, Christ
 teaches them here his end and design why he
 communicated light unto them, or, in other
 terms, why he endowed them with such ex-
 traordinary qualifications, that is to say, to
 enlighten, quicken, and direct their inferior

in point of knowledge; even as the sun in the firmament, and as a candle, duly placed in a house, diffuses and disperses its light to all that are within the reach of it; so should all christians, but more especially his ambassadors, by the light of their lives and conversations, and the purity of their principles, direct the unletter'd christian in his passage towards the heavenly Canaan.

The inference which our Saviour draws from the preceding doctrine, "Ye are the light of the world," is this, that as such, it is a duty indispensably incumbent on you to let your light shine before men. It is here to be observed, however, that notwithstanding our good works should shine, they ought not to glare in the eyes of the beholders. All pomp and parade, all vain-glory and ostentation ought carefully to be avoided; that though we are directed to abound in good works, in such a manner as that men may see them; yet not, that we ourselves may be seen of men; and in the last place, the great and principal end of all our good works, the all that we aim at, and profess to be bound in the performance of them, should be our glorifying of God, and doing good to our fellow creatures.

82. The DIVINE ORATOR; or,

17 In this verse our blessed Lord informs his followers, that he had not the least intention to abrogate any part of the moral law, or to release mankind from the least measure of their duty either towards God or man; but that he came to fulfil that law, not only by yeilding a personal obedience to it, but by giving a fuller and more strict interpretation of it, than the scribes and pharisees were accustomed to give; for they taught, that the law affected the outward man only, and put a restraint only on outward actions. As if our Saviour had expressed himself in words to this, or the like effect; namely, “ Though I preach a more
“ special doctrine than is contained even in
“ the letter of the moral law; yet think not
“ that I came to destroy or dissolve the obligation of that law; for I am come to fulfil the
“ types and predictions of the prophets, and
“ to give you the full sense and spiritual import
“ of the moral law.”

18 In this verse, there is another reason given by our blessed Saviour why he had no thought or intention to abrogate, or abolish the law; and that is drawn from the duration and perpetuity, the immutability and unchangeableness of the law; sooner shall Heaven and

earth

earth be abolished, than the authority and obligation of the moral law shall be dissolved. From whence we may learn, that the law of God is one eternal and invariable rule of life and manners, and is to stand in force as long as the world stands, and the frame of Heaven and earth endures. And from thence likewise we may justly infer, that christianity is in no point whatever repugnant to those laws whereby mankind had formerly been bound and obliged. In a word, Christ commands nothing that the natural or moral law has prohibited, and forbids no one article that it has enjoined; but on the contrary has perfected the law, and carried it to a much higher pitch, than any of the most eminent and profoundly learned rabbies ever imagined themselves formerly to be obliged by it.

19 And to evidence still further, that the moral law is a perfect rule of life, our Saviour tells his disciples, that if any one of them did, either by doctrine or practice, make void the very least of God's commandments, either through indulgence of themselves in omission of any known duty, or in the commission of any known sin, they should never enter into the kingdom of God. From whence it is evident,

84 The DIVINE ORATOR ; or,

dent, that such a professor of christianity as indulges himself in the least voluntary transgression, whether of omission or commission as before observed, and encourages others (by his bad example) to do the like, is doubtless in a very dangerous way, and, without a sincere repentance, is in a state of damnation.

20 In this verse, no less a price than that of the kingdom of Heaven is set before a christian as attainable, if he will but strive hard to win so glorious a reward ; and the means required for the attainment thereof are these : that we must not only be holy and righteous persons but our righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and pharisees ; that is to say, it must exceed it in its principle and motive ; namely we must love God more sincerely, and obey his commandments in a stricter manner. The scribes and pharisees made their own credit and esteem, their own worldly interest and gain, and not the glory of God, the ultimate end of all their actions. They were deficient likewise in the manner of their performance of the duties required at their hands ; for they wanted the principal point, that purity and spiritualness which alone was capable of rendering them acceptable in the sight of God through the merits

of Christ Jesus. They had respect only to the external form of worship; and shewed no regard to the inward intention. The christian, therefore, is under an indispensable obligation to exceed them in sincerity and simplicity of heart, in humility, charity, and in a word, universality of obedience to all God's commandments; for 'tis holiness of heart and righteousness of life which God's laws require of us, without which we can have no real right or title to eternal happiness.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us here reflect on that particular station in which providence has been pleased to place us, and on the various obligations that arise from our particular circumstances in life.

If providence has thought convenient to plant us in a public, and more conspicuous light than many others; let us consider, that the eyes of mankind are upon us. The good regard us, not only to rejoice in our virtues, but to follow us, as great and shining examples: The bad, to glory in our failings, and to support themselves in their vices by our misconduct.

Let us reflect then on the important consequences of our deportment, and what an influence

ence it will have on all around us. Let us consider, in case we excite mankind, with the warmest and most fervent zeal, to the steady practice of righteousness and holiness; that an exceeding weight of glory is prepared for us; but, if we make an ill use of our vocation and become patterns of injustice and ungodliness, how dreadful must our account inevitably be, and how inexpressibly shall we be punished for our wilful transgressions, our sins against light and knowledge! what less can we expect than to have that terrible sentence of condemnation passed on one of the worst of sinners; namely, "Wo unto you, it had been good for you, if he had not been born."

But, if providence should be pleased to afflict us a private station, let us weigh well with ourselves, let us meditate on the excellency of those precepts which must endure for ever; let us reflect on the great importance of those obligations that can never cease. Let us make our principal care and study to know and digest them well; let us search for them as for hidden treasure, as for those truly valuable and lasting riches which will never fail us.

Let us consider that true religion does not consist in modes and forms; not in slavish

following any one party whatsoever, or zealously supporting any favourite interest ; but in an entire resignation to the divine will, a perfect obedience to the laws of God, and an utter detestation of all iniquitous devices ; in as near an imitation as possible of the best and most beneficent Being ; in a steady adherence to truth, and, in a word, in the constant practice of universal goodness : let us tremble therefore at the thoughts of being seduced by outward shew, and be well guarded against the least subversion through the insinuation, or flattering applauses of artful and designing men ; since we may be well assured, that unless our righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and pharisees, those strict observers of the ceremonial law, we shall have no interest in the Lord Jesus, God's only true Messiah.

Let us farther reflect, with the deepest humility and greatest admiration, on the glorious dispensation before us ; a dispensation which exhibits life and immortality to our view in the most beautiful manner, and the strong obligations which it has laid us under. Has that divine person, by whom the ages were established, and through whom the worlds were formed ; as he condescended so low, as to leave that

glory which he was possessed of from the beginning, and in a mortal body submitted to all the spotless infirmities of the life of man, that he might exhibit, in the fairest and clearest light, the laws and statutes of his heavenly Father; and in his own personal deportment, set us a most shining and perfect example of obedience; and would it not be an act of ingratitude in us of the deepest dye, should we refuse to follow that Lamb of God, wherever he thought proper to lead us, and trace so excellent a pattern for our imitation?

Let us then meditate on his laws, like king David, day and night; let us employ all our faculties in the understanding them aright, in so much that being deeply impressed by the infinite obligations we lie under, we may be found in the constant and universal practice of all his wise and indulgent injunctions; and by those means perfected in all our habits of righteousness and godliness, we may be prepared to meet the blessed Jesus, the great Judge both of the quick and the dead, at the unknown hour of the watch, be it sooner or later, and with him have an abundant entrance admitted to us, into those ever-blessed mansions of peace and love, which he is gone before

prepare for all those who sincerely love him, and with chearfulness, and implicit faith keep all his commandments.

CHRIST'S Explication of the Sixth Commandment.

The TEXTS according to St. MATTHEW.

CHAP. V. ver. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26.

21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill : and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment.

22 But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment : and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council : but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire.

23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee.

24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to

thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

25 Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him: lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison,

26 Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the utmost farthing.

PARALLEL TEXTS to the Six preceding VERSES.

21 Thou shalt not kill.—EXOD. xx. 13.
The same commandment repeated.

DEUT. v. 17

22 Whoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know, that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.—JOHN. iii. 15.

23 Offer the gift that Moses commanded

MATT. viii

Ye fools, and blind: for whether is greater the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift

MATT. xxiii. 10

24 G

24 Go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering.—JOB xlii. 8.

If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my father which is in heaven.—MATT. xviii. 19.

I will that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting.

I TIM. ii. 8.

That your prayers be not hindered.

I PET. iii. 7.

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.—ROM. xii. 18.

25, 26 When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him.—LUKE xii. 58.

For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee, in a time when thou mayest be found.—PSALM xxxii. 6.

Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame.

PROV. xxv. 8.

Seek ye the Lord while he may be found,
call ye upon him while he is near.

ISAIAH lv. 6.

A familiar PARAPHRASE of the Six
preceding VERSES of the TEXT.

21 **M**Y coming, then, or my personal
appearance here on earth, is so far
from having the least tendency towards the in-
dulgence of my disciples, or followers, in any
liberties, from which thy were restrained by
the moral law; that I come, not only to
confirm and strengthen it in all its parts, but
in divers particulars, to heighten and enlarge
it: as for instance, the law of Moses only
prohibited murder, and annexed death as the
punishment due to so rash and heinous a trans-
gression.

22 But I charge you, to refrain from the
very first motion of anger and wrath in your
hearts; for, depend upon it, whoever will
indulge himself in an audacious and revengeful
disposition, which provokes and stirs him up
to enmity and strife without any just provoca-
tion; that man, I say, shall expose himself

the just displeasure and vengeance of the Almighty; in proportion to the offence of murder, which is customarily punished with the death of the transgressor. And the man who indulges himself in still greater liberties, and proceeds with arrogance and presumption publicly to reproach and revile his neighbour, shall have his punishment heightened in proportion to that greater punishment which the Jewish council inflicts on more open enormous offenders: but a man who gives a loose to all his inordinate lust and affections, and audaciously presumes to scandalize his brother, and censures him as an object highly worthy of hell and damnation, shall be punished by the Almighty with the utmost severity in a hell of fire and brimstone, in proportion to that most shocking torture of burning alive, which is frequently practised on the most flagrant, and most enormous offenders.

23 When, therefore, your thoughts are bent upon offering up your prayers to the Almighty, consider carefully within your minds, whether any such instance you have wronged, or proceeded with injustice against your brother; and by that means stirred up the anger of God against you.

24 And

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24 And if, upon examination of your heart you find you have been guilty of so notorious a crime, first find out your brother, confess your mis-behaviour towards him, and endeavour to procure his pardon; and after a perfect reconciliation between you, then, and not till then, offer up your prayers to God Almighty, who well knowing the inmost recesses of your heart, and discerning your most sincere repentance, will forgive you, and accept of such contrition.

25 and 26 And such a deportment as this is nothing more than what the common affairs of life absolutely require: for, if you are in variance with another, and the contest is likely to be carried to too high a pitch, a prudent submission at first will soon extinguish the flames that were just breaking out, and the quarrel will cease; but if once you have put the reconciliation out of your own power, and you have referred your cause too rashly to the absolute determination of the magistrate, there then remains nothing but the fearful expectation of his final sentence, and all hopes of an amicable accommodation are entirely over.

Thus under my institution, you may, in this life, prevent all the sad effects of your past transgressions, by faith and repentance; but if you delay, till death and judgment overtake you, the sentence must pass, and inexpressible torments must unavoidably be the fatal consequence of such your fatal neglect.

OCCASIONAL REFLECTIONS ON THE SIX preceding VERSES.

21, 22 Here our divine orator begins to expound the spiritual sense and meaning of the law, and to vindicate it from the corrupt glosses of the scribes and pharisees: and here the reader is to observe, that our Lord delivers no new law, but expounds the old one; enjoins no new duties, but enforces those which had been before established. The law of God was always perfect, requiring the whole race of mankind to love the Lord their God, with all their heart, soul, and strength, and their neighbour as themselves.

In this exposition of the law our blessed Saviour begins with the sixth commandment. Thou shalt not kill. In which he shews, the various ways a person may violate that prohibition;

bition; namely, not only by the actual guilt of murder, but also by rash and unruly anger and by unjust and opprobrious language. From whence we may learn, that every evil motion of our hearts against our neighbour, to the prejudice of his person or reputation, all unjust anger and malice, all terms of ignominy and reproach, are as much forbidden by the law of God, as the gross act of murder itself. From hence likewise it is evident, that anger and wrath, when indulged without any just cause, have their several degrees; and according to the heinousness and aggravation of the sin, the degrees of punishment in the next world will be duly proportioned. As to the peculiar term of slander, which our blessed Saviour here mentions, namely, *Raca*; it signifies a cursed or abandoned wretch; that is to say, a vain empty, despicable, senseless creature; one unworthy of the name of a man. Some imagine the words (without cause) in the foregoing part of the verse are to be understood in this place, for this reason; because our blessed Lord himself calls the scribes and pharisees fools, blind, whited sepulchres, serpents, a generation of vipers, &c. It may be justly questioned, however, whether we may imitate our divine orator in such instances as these,

because

because he came with an extraordinary commission from God, and well knew to whom such terms could truly and with just cause be applied. Such opprobrious terms, therefore, should be used by us but very seldom, if ever at all.—But to return to our observations, there is one lesson of instruction more that naturally arises from this particular text, and that is, the prohibition of self-murder; which in no case can possibly be lawful, or praise-worthy, since no person has any more power over his own life, than that of his neighbour's. Though life should prove ever so deplorable or painful, yet we must wait God's time for our dismissal, and submit with patience to his divine will.

23, 24, 25, 26 In order to prevent the sin of rash and causeless anger, which in our Saviour's account is one degree of murder, he exhorts here all his disciples and followers to brotherly love and unity one with another, and, when offence is casually given, to seek a mutual reconciliation as soon as possible. Agree with thine adversary, that is to say, thy injured or offending brother. Agree with him just as becomes a man; and then quickly, as soon as becomes a christian; in which words are implied, a duty indispensably incumbent on us because

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to act in that manner. Here the reader is to observe, the argument or motive, with which our blessed Lord enforces his exhortation to brotherly love, peace and unity, drawn from the peril and danger of the neglect thereof. None of our performances, we may be assured will find acceptance with the Almighty, in case there should unhappily be found malice and hatred, malevolence and anger in our hearts against our brother. Moreover, we shall find that no sacrifice whatever, which we can offer will be acceptable in the sight of God, so long as we ourselves treat our fellow-creatures with an implacable hatred and abhorrence. And if we obstinately persist in that unforgiving frame of mind, we may be assured, that God will be our adversary, when we appear before him in judgment: Christ will be our impartial judge, satan will be our accuser, and hell the consequence of our presumption and perverseness.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us here seriously consider the kind and design of the injunction now before us. What is it but to promote peace, and order, and to establish with our own an univer-

good? what is it but to preserve ourselves from the worst of tyrannies, namely, that of our inordinate and unruly passions? what is it, in a word, but to curb the source of ill-will and displeasure in our minds; to give a check to the very first motions of resentment and malignity; to raise in us the most intense degree of love, benevolence and forgiveness, whereby we become qualified for the society of angels, and are made partakers even of a divine nature?

Let us farther reflect, that by rage and resentment we lose our tempers, provoke our adversaries, and render the injury perpetual without the least hope of a reconciliation: by forgiveness, we at least blunt the edge of our enemy's malice and hatred; if we don't actually procure his friendship. By the acknowledging our faults, and making sufficient reparation for them, we endeavour, as much as in us lies, to restore that order and harmony of the moral world, which we had before most shamefully interrupted.

What is it then that our blessed Lord and Saviour requires of us? nothing more than to be as prudent, free, and accountable beings;

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in order to our admittance hereafter into God's celestial mansions.

And this is to make us free, indeed, to rescue us from the most dreadful bondage of rage and resentment, and all the fatal consequences that naturally arise therefrom; passions, that rend the soul to pieces, and render us unfit for social life; passions, that premeditate mischief, and make evil their principal aim and design.

Once more let us reflect, with transport, on our peculiar happiness, in having our lot cast under the gospel of peace; that we are planted, where the most indulgent and benevolent laws of our King, our Saviour, our only true Messiah, are exhibited in the strongest and most advantageous light; what sentiments of gratitude ought they to excite in our breasts? with what unwearied industry should we fix them in our hearts? what attention ought we always to afford them, in order to our cheerful practice of them in every occurrence of life, and our minds being incessantly inflamed with their divine excellence and everlasting beauty?

CHRIST'S Explication of the Seventh
Commandment.

The TEXT according to St. MATTHEW.

CH A P. V. ver. 27, 28, 29, 30.

27 Ye have heard that it was said by them
of old time, Thou shalt not commit
adultery.

28 But I say unto you, that whosoever
looketh on a woman to lust after her,
hath committed adultery with her al-
ready in his heart.

29 And if thy right eye offend thee,
pluck it out, and cast it from thee:
for it is profitable for thee that one of
thy members should perish, and not
that thy whole body should be cast
into hell.

30 And if thy right hand offend thee,
cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it
is profitable for thee that one of thy

members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

PARALLEL TEXTS to the Four Preceding VERSES.

27 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

EXOD. xx. 14

The same commandment is repeated.

DEUT. v. 18

Thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour's wife, to defile thyself with her.

LEVIT. xviii. 20

He that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.—LEVIT. xx. 10.

If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die.—DEUT. xxii. 22.

Whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doth it destroyeth his own soul.—PROV. vi. 32.

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I will be a swift witness against the adulterers.

MAL. iii. 5.

From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications.

MARK vii. 21.

Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?—JOHN viii. 4, 5.

Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.—HEB. xiii. 4.

28 I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?

JOB xxxi. 1.

Lust not after her beauty in thine heart? neither let her take thee with her eye-lids.

PROV. vi. 25.

Having eyes full of adultery.—2 PET. ii. 14.

29, 30 If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to

enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell-fire.

MATT. xviii. 9.

If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out : it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire. MARK ix. 47.

Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity

PSALM. cxix. 37.

There are some eunuchs, which were born from their mother's womb; and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men : and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of Heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it. MATT. xix. 12.

If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die : but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. ROM. viii. 13.

I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection : lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be cast-away. 1 COR. ix. 27.

Mort

the BEAUTY of HOLINESS. 105

Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth : fornication, uncleanness, &c,

COL. iii. 5,

A familiar PARAPHRASE of the Four preceding VERSES.

27 **A** GAIN, the law saith, thou shalt not commit adultery.

28 But I say unto you, whosoever looketh on a woman with an unchaste desire and intention, is guilty of adultery in his own mind, and in the eye of God, though he may not possibly have the least opportunity of any criminal conversation with her.

29, 30 These stricter and more sublime precepts may, in all probability, seem altogether as difficult to be practised, as plucking out a right-eye, or cutting off a right-hand. If any thing, however, as dear to you as either of them, be the least cause of making you guilty of sin, 'tis much more prudent to be resolutely bent, to be absolutely determined in your mind to part with it ; and to bear the present inconvenience with some degree of patience, how disagreeable, how irksome soever that

that inconvenience may possibly be, than to suffer it to be the occasion of your eternal ruin and destruction.

Occasional REFLECTIONS on the Four preceding VERSES.

27, 28 Here our Saviour proceeds to give his audience an explication of the seventh commandment, which prohibits adultery ; by which term the scribes and pharisees understood only the gross act of uncleanness, and carnal conversation with another man's wife : our blessed Lord, however, carries the idea of this monstrous vice a great deal higher ; for, according to his sentiments of it, the man, who only secretly in his heart, in thought only, and not in fact, desires such a close union and familiarity with a married woman, and casts his eyes upon her with such a sinful inclination, and is transported with pleasure through the entertainment of it in fancy only, is an actual adulterer and a criminal in the eye of God. From whence we may learn, that the law of God is so pure and spiritual, that it actually condemns speculative lasciviousness no less than practical and gross uncleanness : and prohibits not only the external action, but the secret

purpose

purpose and intention, and first eager longings of the soul after unlawful pleasure.

29, 30 In the twenty-eighth verse our divine
 ator censures and condemns ocular adultery,
 or the adultery of the eye. "He that looketh
 on a woman, says he, to lust after her, hath
 committed adultery with her already in his
 heart."

From whence we may learn, that the eye is
 an inlet to sin, especially the sin of uncleanness;
 lust enters into the heart through the
 window of the eye. In these verses, however,
 our blessed Lord prescribes a remedy for the cure
 of this eye-disease. "If thine eye offend thee,
 says he, at once pluck it out."

Now we are not to understand these precepts
 of his, as if it was a duty incumbent on us in
 any case whatever to pull out our eyes, or to
 cut off our hands; but the meaning is, that
 notwithstanding any favourite lust should prove
 as dear to us as is a right eye, or a right hand,
 we must determine at all events to part with it,
 rather than by our indulgence of it, plunge
 both body and soul into everlasting torments.
 Here it is to be observed, that, in the sacred
 scriptures, sin is compared to a natural body;

as therefore the natural body has many members, so the body of sin has many members likewise. From hence, moreover, we may learn, that sin may, by a proper resistance and pious resolution, be avoided. It is a duty incumbent on every true christian to avoid every thing that has the least tendency to vice, and may possibly be the occasion of sin : if he find the view of an ensnaring object will ensnare him, he must make a covenant with his eyes, though he is not obliged to pluck them out, though he will turn them another way. The best course, in short, that any one can take, to preserve himself from the external commission of any sin, is to mortify the inward affections, and vicious inclinations towards it : by such timely mortification, he will destroy it in the very root ; if his inward affections be but duly mortified his bodily members may be spared for they will no longer prove the instrument of sin, but of righteousness unto the beauty of holiness.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us look upon adultery as a crime not to be mentioned, but with the deepest horror and detestation ; as a vice, extremely dangerous and difficult to be forgiven ; as an action, in short,

both base and treacherous to the last degree,
 and destructive of all social felicity. Let us
 look, therefore, on this decree of our divine
 creator as strictly just and righteous, and readily
 acknowledge, that he has exerted his wisdom
 and goodness in a very conspicuous manner,
 thus guarding against the first approaches to
 this dishonourable, this detested, this most a-
 bominable sin. Let us, then, treasure up this
 divine prohibition of his in our hearts, that the
 glare of beauty may never dazzle our eyes, nor
 the least impurity lead us astray. Let us re-
 flect, with thanksgiving, on the divine good-
 ness, that has given such an indulgent check to
 the first step, the very first approach towards so
 detestable a transgression; to that source of all
 disorder and confusion. Let us not presume to
 indulge ourselves in one vain or idle thought,
 or suffer one inordinate or unruly appetite or
 affection to possess our bosoms; since we are
 sensible of the fatal consequences that may
 ensue; of the destructive way we may possibly
 be led into thereby. Better that mill-stones
 should be tied about our necks, and ourselves
 cast down into the sea, than such a band of furies,
 or a legion of lawless wishes should be let
 loose in our breasts; wishes, never to be ap-
 peased, and more destructive and devouring than
 the

the grave itself. Let us think no difficulty too unsurmountable, in order to avoid such a state of confusion; let us grutch no diligence or application, in order to preserve ourselves from impurity, and defilement; let the punishment threatened upon our indulgence terrify us, and the reward, annexed to our avoidance of the temptation, excite us to a steady obedience. Let us, in this holy warfare, resolutely cut off the right hand of our inordinate and unruly affections, and pluck out the right eye of all our sensual desires. Let us prostrate ourselves before the Almighty, in a deep sense of our own weakness; let us implore the incessant interposition of his divine aid and assistance; let us, in a word, beseech the God of all purity and holiness, through the merits of the holy Jesus, to deliver us from all pollution, and preserve our bodies, souls, and spirits, pure and spotless to the second coming of his only-begotten Son, the same blessed Jesus, when he will appear in all his majesty and glory to judge both the quick and the dead, and whose kingdom shall have no end.

CHRIST'S Explication of the Seventh
Commandment continued.

The TEXT, according to St. MATTHEW.

CHAP. V. ver. 31, 32.

31 It hath been said, whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement.

32 But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery.

PARALLEL TEXTS to the Two preceding VERSES.

When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.

DEUT. xxiv. 1.

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The pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? &c.—MATT. xix. 3, &c.

The pharisees came to him, and asked him, is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him, &c.—MARK x. 2, &c.

Our blessed Lord affirms, that whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and who so marieth her which is put away, doth commit adultery.

MATT. xix. 9

The same thing is affirmed, only this clause (saving for the cause of fornication) is not added, in LUKE xvi. 18.

The Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hath dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? yet had he the residue of the spirit: and wherefore one? that he might seek a godly seed: therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.—MAL. ii. 14, 15.

Who

Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.

MARK X. II.

Unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, let not the wife depart from her husband : but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband : and let not the husband put away his wife.

I COR. vii. 10, 11.

A familiar PARAPHRASE of the six preceding VERSES.

31 **A** GAIN, the law permitted a man in sundry cases to give his wife a bill of divorcement.

32 But I say unto you, this was not according to the original intention of the Almighty ; but was only permitted to the Jews, on no other account than the hardness and perverseness of their hearts, and in order to prevent greater and more gross evils : from this time forwards, therefore, whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another (the cause of adultery only excepted) shall be looked upon, and deemed guilty of causing both her that is put away, and him that shall afterwards marry her, to commit adultery.

114 The DIVINE ORATOR; or,

Occasional REFLECTIONS on the two preceding VERSES.

Our blessed Saviour still proceeds in vindicating and clearing the seventh commandment from the corrupt glosses of the scribes and pharisees. God Almighty had so far indulged the Jews, as to permit them to put away their wives by a bill of divorcement, in case of uncleanness;—DEUT. xxiv. 1.

And thereupon the scribes and pharisees maintained it lawful to put away a wife upon any trivial occasion; any slight act of hers that might give a man cause of offence, or create his displeasure. This abuse our divine orator corrects, and demonstrates, that a bill of divorcement (except in the case of adultery evidently proved) is a certain breach of the seventh commandment. From hence we may learn, in the first place, that the marriage covenant between two persons is so indissoluble in the sight of God, that no misconduct, no act of indiscretion, and no less crime than that of absolute adultery, can ever disannul the holy bands: and in the next place, that when any persons are with justice put away for the heinous crime above-mentioned, it is unlaw-

for them to marry others, or for others, conscious of such their breach of faith, to be married to them.

IMPROVEMENT.

Here let us adore that divine goodness that hath delivered us from the temptations which arise from the too frequent divorcements amongst the sons of men. By this wise and indulgent prohibition, the peace and harmony of the marriage state is secured : the shameful wanderings of inordinate and unruly affections are prevented ; and the fatal consequences of rage and resentment restrained, and kept within due limitations.

How thankful ought we to be to this most indulgent restorer of the original marriage institution ! with what detestation should we reflect on that direful havock which licentious lust has made in former ages ; how sincerely ought we to rejoice in that delightful path of true happiness, and lasting love, which is now guarded by such holy, just, and indulgent laws, whereby the mind is kept under subjection, and preserved from the first source of unrestrained desires.

And whilst we are thus wrapped up in meditation on the perfect beauty, and transporting pleasures of the marriage state; on the fitness and absolute necessity, that the union whereby this lower world is sufficiently stored with inhabitants, should be inviolable; and that nothing should separate the dear, united pair whose mutual endeavours are so highly requisite to form the tender mind, and raise a future race to righteousness and holiness; let us fall prostrate and adore that prince of peace by whom the matrimonial state stands thus secured from everlasting blot and foul invasion.



CHRIST'S Precepts in regard to Swearing

The TEXT according to St. MATTHEW.

CHAP. V. ver. 33, 34, 35, 36, 37

33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths.

34 But

4 But I say unto you, swear not at all,
neither by Heaven, for it is God's
throne :

5 Nor by the earth, for it is his foot-
stool : neither by Jerusalem, for it is
the city of the great King.

6 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head,
because thou canst not make one hair
white or black.

7 But let your communication be yea,
yea, nay, nay: for whatsoever is more
than these cometh of evil.

PARALLEL TEXTS to the five pre-
ceding VERSES.

33 Wo unto you, ye blind guides, which
, whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is
37 thing : but whosoever shall swear by the gold
the temple, he is a debtor.

MATT. xxiii. 16.

The third commandment.—EXOD. xx. 7.

The same repeated.—DEUT. v. 11.

118 The DIVINE ORATOR; or,

Ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou prophane the name of thy God: I am the Lord.—LEVIT. xix. 12.

That (vow) which is gone out of thy lips, thou shalt keep and perform.

DEUT. xxiii. 23.

34, 35, 36 Wo unto you, ye blind guides which say, whosoever shall swear by the altar it is nothing: but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.

MATT. xxiii. 18.

But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by Heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath.—JAMES v. 12.

Thus saith the Lord, the Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my foot-stool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest.—ISAIAH lxvi.

And he that shall swear by Heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.—MATT. xxiii. 22.

Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.—PSALM xlviii.

37 Let your speech be always with grace,
seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye
ought to answer every man.—COL. iv. 6.

Let your yea be yea, and your nay be nay ;
lest ye fall into condemnation.

JAMES v. 12.

A familiar PARAPHRASE of the five
preceding VERSES.

3 **T**O proceed ;—The law only prohibits
all perjury and false swearing among
men, and requires an exact and religious per-
formance of the obligations they had laid
themselves under by their oaths ; and therefore
to be as duly and punctually performed, as if
God was visibly present to punish the violation
of them.

34 I command you, however, to abstain ab-
solutely from all swearing in your common
conversation, as is the frequent practice of the
Jews in general ; by means whereof, that most
solemn action, for the putting a more speedy
stop to strife and contention, loses its due reve-
rence and weight. Never flatter yourselves, I
say, that you lessen the sin in swearing by infe-
rior

rior and created things : for this is, in effect swearing by the great Creator of all things ; for which reason, I enjoin you never to swear by Heaven ; for that is swearing by the God of Heaven, whose throne it is.

35 Neither will I permit you to swear by the earth, for that is swearing by God, whose foot-stool the earth is ; neither by the city of Jerusalem ; since God has been pleased to honour it, by his becoming its immediate governor and lawgiver, and for that reason is in effect an appeal to God himself.

36 Neither shall you swear by things of less moment or importance, which still is an appeal to that Almighty power which created them : as for example, your swearing by your head, is swearing by God, who created and fashioned it according to his good-will and pleasure : nay, your very hairs were formed by him ; and he bestowed that particular colour upon them he thought fit ; neither is it in your own power to make them grey before the time ; and when they are silvered over by age, though they might have been yellow or black before, you can never restore them to their original hue again.

37 For which reason, under my institution, the plainest and most simple conversation is insisted on, and judged most requisite, consisting of nothing more than bare affirmations or denials; which are all that are any ways necessary to be used by an honest and upright man, whose word will always be taken, without a thousand elevations, which not only proceed from an idle habit, and a rash and wicked temper of mind, but frequently create a jealousy, that what is so vehemently asserted, and with so much seeming zeal, is not sound, or perfect truth, when duly examined.

OCCASIONAL REFLECTIONS on the five preceding VERSES.

33, 34, 35, 36, 37 Here our blessed Saviour expounds and vindicates the third commandment, which requires a reverend and careful use of God's holy name, and an absolute forbearance of the mention of it on any idle and trivial occasion, which is, in the worst sense, taking his name in vain. Now the scribes and pharisees endeavoured to maintain, that nothing but absolute, bare-faced perjury was a violation of this commandment, and that common swearing was an innocent and harmless habit enough,

enough, in case the party who practised it did not forswear himself: nay, they farther taught that persons were only obliged to swear by the name of God, in a court of judicature, but in their ordinary and common discourse, they might swear without giving any just grounds for offence, by any created being whatsoever. Now in contradiction to these shocking and erroneous principles, our divine orator charged them not to swear at all; that is to say, not swear prophanely, or in their common discourse; not to swear rashly, and without thought by any of God's creatures; nor lightly, upon any frivolous and trivial occasion; for oaths, uttered without consideration, are sins of a deadly, scandalous, indecent, and to the last degree blame-worthy.—Our blessed Lord, however, does not here absolutely prohibit oaths, but only restrains them; for notwithstanding needless and common swearing be a very heinous crime; yet it is a christian and necessary duty to take an oath upon any solemn occasion, where a court of judicature demands it of us: 'tis demonstrable, that Christ himself, when adjured by the high-priest, did reply upon oath. As an oath, however, is an act of religious worship, it is a most horrid provocation

trifle with it, and make a practice of it in common discourse.

37 In this verse our blessed Saviour prescribes a proper remedy for shunning the occasion, and danger of rash and inconsiderate swearing; and that is, by accustoming ourselves in our ordinary discourse, to a true simplicity and constant plainness in the expression of our thoughts; whether with respect to our affirmations or denials, according to the nature of the topic whereon we are discoursing; refraining, with all diligence and precaution, from the use of oaths, 'till we are called to them upon such solemn occasions, as are requisite for ending strife and contention between man and man. From this prescription of our blessed Lord we may learn, that as the great end of speech is to communicate our sentiments one to another, we ought to use such simplicity and plainness of expression, that we may be fully satisfied of each others veracity, without any needless oaths, or solemn and religious asseverations.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us here consider, what even natural religion requires of us. As we have received our

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existence,

existence, and every other blessing we enjoy, from our most indulgent and bountiful Creator; so, doubtless, we should possess our breasts with the highest reverence and regard for him; and so think of him, as to be always influenced in the strongest manner by his authority over us. Let us not presume then, to mention the name of that most excellent and adorable Being in a light and trivial way; let us not dare to call upon God in a vain and irreverent manner, who has power to raise us to the highest pitch of human felicity, or sink us to the lowest degree of misery and perdition. Let us be very cautious how we call the supreme Lord of Heaven and earth to witness our follies and make his holy and tremendous name bear a part in any of our loose and idle amusements since such a rash proceeding is to debase his glory, to treat him with such an indecent familiarity, as we should blush to make use of towards an earthly prince, or even towards one of his attendants.

If an eastern monarch would think death to be a slight punishment for using his name to support a falsehood; let us think what punishment we should deserve, if we durst impiously appeal to that God who made us, in attestation of

untruth

untruth; or if we presumed to neglect the performance of any action, to which we have bound ourselves by his most reverend, holy, and awful name.

If then our regard to an oath is of such great moment and importance; if an oath is never to be taken, but for the peace and tranquillity of our neighbours, and for putting an end to strife and contention between them, as also for the security of government; if the reverence that is due to it suffers, and is destroyed by loose and prophane swearing; if a state of confusion and disorder is introduced by that means; what acknowledgments are due to our indulgent Instructor, who, by so salutary, so well grounded a law, has taken the most effectual method to prevent us from looking upon an oath with an eye of contempt, or making use of it but on the most solemn occasion?

How wonderfully has our wise law-giver here preserved us from the danger that attends the common swearer? not only from impiously rendering, as it were, to pieces the sacred and tremendous name of the most High; but also from falling into numberless surprizes of false

swearing, which would but too soon betray us into the most deliberate perjury, and must unavoidably end in our damnation.

How beautifully has Christ here prescribed to us that amiable conversation, which is calm, open, and innocent; a conversation that carries conviction in its delivery, and gives an inexpressible grace to the speaker?

Let then our words for the future, be conducted by sobriety and righteousness; let modesty and truth preside over our conversation; that the hearer may give due credit to what we assert, and that the words of our mouth may find an easy access to his heart; then shall we rejoice in the day of visitation, and shall partake of those pleasures, “which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man to conceive.”

How wonderfully has our wise law-giver preserved us from the danger that attends common discourse, not only from impurity but from error. It were to pick the tares and weeds from the name of the most high; but the Christian is to be a law-giver, and to give the law to his hearers.

CHRIST'S Doctrine in regard to Retaliation.

The TEXTS according to St. MATTHEW.

CHAP. V. v. 38, 39, 40, 41, 42.

38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.

39 But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

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42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away.

PARALLEL TEXTS to the five preceding
VERSES.

38 Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.—EXOD. xxi. 24.

Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth : as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again.

LEVIT. xxiv. 20.

Thine eye shall not pity, but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.—DEUT. xix. 21.

39, 40 Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me : I will render to the man according to his work.—PROV. xxiv. 29.

Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people.

LEVIT. xix. 18.

Say not thou, I will recompense evil : but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee.

PROV. xx. 22.

He that revengeth shall find vengeance of the Lord, and he will surely keep his sins in remembrance.—ECCLUS. xxviii. 1, &c.

Unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other: and him that taketh away thy cloke, forbid not to take thy coat also.—LUKE vi. 29.]

Recompence to no man evil for evil. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, vengeance is mine; I will repay it saith the Lord.

ROM. xii. 17, 19.

There is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another: why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?

I COR. vi. 7.

See that none render evil for evil unto any man: but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

I THES. v. 15.

Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.

I PET. ii. 23.

Nor

Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise, blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called that ye should inherit a blessing.—1 PET. iii. 9.

He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him: he is filled full with reproach.

LAMEN. iii. 30.

41 And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.

MATT. xxvii. 32.

And they compel one Simon, a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country.

MARK xv. 21.

42 Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, that is, the poor man, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth. Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.—DEUT. xv. 8, 10.

Love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again: and your reward shall be great, when ye shall have

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ward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful, and to the evil.—LUKE vi. 35.

He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given, will he pay him again.—PROV. xix. 17.

A familiar PARAPHRASE of the five preceding VERSES.

8 **A**GAIN, the judicial law allows of retaliation, and permits the return of injury for injury, and loss for loss.

39 But under my dispensation, this practice shall by no means be allowed; neither shall ye oppose violence with violence: and this command I lay upon all my followers, that, if they cannot procure redress for the injuries they sustain, in a peaceable and quiet manner, they not only bear them with patience and meekness, but run the hazard of having those injuries repeated, rather than to have recourse for relief to resentment and revenge.

40 Nay further, if any man will, under pretence of public justice, attempt to deprive you of what you have even an indisputable right and

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and title to; (provided the debate in question be a concern of no great weight or importance) rather let him have his will; nay, rather yield him even more than he demands, than continue in contention with him.

41 And lastly, in case any imperious magistrate shall oblige you to perform any unreasonable service in regard to your attendance on public business; do twice the duty that is exacted of you, rather than by refusing, even what he has no right to demand, you involve yourself in strife and contention; nay, though his demands are absolutely unjust, yet comply with them, if they happen to prove of no great moment, rather than suffer your own peace of mind to be injured, or your temper any way ruffled or discomposed.

42 In a word, use your utmost endeavour to relieve the necessities of the poor and needy, and contribute, as far as in you lies, towards the general peace and satisfaction of all your fellow-creatures. To him that begs an alms of you, give with a free and open heart; and to him that desires only to borrow, be not backward to lend the sum requested.

Occasion

Occasional REFLECTIONS on the five preceding VERSES.

38, 39, 40, 41, 42 Our blessed Saviour, in these five verses, vindicates the sixth commandment, whereby we are indispensably obliged to do no act of injury; no act of oppression or violence to our neighbour, in regard either to his person or possessions. The Almighty had given the Jewish magistrates a law (for wise reasons best known to himself) whereby, when a person was injured or oppressed, he might require an eye for an eye, or a tooth for a tooth: upon this indulgence, the scribes and pharisees taught, that any private person, who was wronged by his neighbour, might demand satisfaction from him in kind, or, in other terms, in equal degree of proportion to the injury received: if he had lost an eye or a tooth by him, he might legally revenge the assault, and insist upon a suitable restitution: our blessed Lord, however, in this portion of scripture, declares with warmth against the irregular practice: the law indeed, says he, formerly indulged you in this sentiment of retaliation; but I say unto you, "resist not evil"; that is to say, seek no private revenge, but submit

submit the avenging of injuries to God Almighty and his vice-gereat, the magistrate, in a court of equity: and, in matters but of small moment or importance, make no appeal, seek for no restitution; or, if you find yourselves under an absolute necessity to make your appeal, do it not, with any view of revenge, in anger and resentment. Hence the true christian may learn, that he ought rather to suffer a double injury, than to revenge a single one; the doctrine of patience and forbearance is here recommended to his practice in the strongest point of light. Religion, indeed, does not command us to invite injuries, to take a secret pride in being ill-used; but when we meet with them, to be patient and submissive under them; we are forbid to return evil for evil, and rather to endure a greater evil, than revenge a less.

The thirty-ninth and fortieth verses of this paragraph in the text, therefore, containing Christ's precept, in regard to non-resistance, are not to be understood according to the strict letter, but as spoken proverbially. For no christian is required here to turn the other cheek to the smiter; or, if a man will take away his cloke, to give him his coat likewise: no, he is under no obligation to give up his possession

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too tamely to every unrighteous and illegal invader ; neither is he prohibited, or purposely deterred from having recourse to the law, in his own defence ; when he happens to be called before a magistrate, or established judge ; for this our blessed Lord himself did, in the case of him that smote him in the presence of the high-priest. (See JOHN the xviii. 22, 23) And St. Paul, we find, pleads his privilege of being a Roman, to save himself from being scourged. (See ACTS xxii. 25.) Neither are we forbidden in all cases to bring others before judges or magistrates, in vindication of our just rights and legal demands. For St. Paul's deportment towards those magistrates, who had beaten him and Silas uncondemned, being Romans (see ACTS xvi. 37, &c.) seems to imply, that he intended to do himself justice, had not the magistrates, by their compliance with the terms proposed by him, prevented him from a legal prosecution.

What we are here forbidden is this, and no more ; namely, to go to law for trifles, for small and inconsiderable losses, and acts of oppression. We are expressly forbid here, it is true, to seek private revenge, and make public appeals to courts of judicature, with no other

view than to gratify a malicious temper, or frame of mind ; and moreover, we are forbid, indeed, to seek such reparation for injuries received, as can never make us the least compensation ; which he would do, who should require an eye for the loss of an eye, &c. had we any such law amongst us. Turning the cheek to the smiter, therefore, in this precept of our Saviour's, bears no other meaning, than if he had said, " when you are treated with indignities ; when you are injured and abused " never aim at seeking revenge on that account, but bear with cheerfulness, patience and forbearance, those insults which you may meet with, as I have done before you.

And though our blessed Lord says farther whosoever shall * compel you to go a mile

* The word here rendered, compel, is derived from a Persian-term, which signifies, in our language, a courier, or court-messenger. Those persons, as we may properly call them, being employed in carrying letters, or dispatches of importance, from the sovereign prince or prime ministers of state, were invested with such an authority, that they could, at pleasure, press either men, cattle, or ships, if occasion required, in order to expedite their journey. And it is highly probable, that so extensive an authority might have been too frequently abused to the oppression of the fellow-subjects.

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with him twain: it does not follow from that precept, that we are indispensably obliged to be at the beck of every one, who should take upon himself the privilege of employing us; but the meaning of our divine orator seems to be no more than this: that he would advise us, when any small violence should be offered to us, under the pretext of public authority, cheerfully and readily to do more than our duty, rather than dispute the point, and raise a contention about it.

In the last of the foregoing verses, our blessed Saviour presses the law of charity upon his disciples; that is to say, he exhorts them not only to be liberal to those that beg for relief; but to lend a reasonable sum, where they find a favourable opportunity, to such as desire only to borrow. Christ, by this precept, obliges all his faithful followers, whom God hath blessed with abilities, to abound in every good work. He that is truly charitable does not only give but lend likewise: nay, sometimes lends, where he has no prospect or expectation of any return. It is not sufficient to exert ourselves in one act of charity only, but we must be ready and willing to render our bounty and benevolence as extensive as possible. To give is a God-like act; for God is the

giver of every good and perfect gift; he gives before we ask; and 'tis a duty incumbent on every christian, that is able, to imitate that divine benefactor, by bestowing his alms with chearfulness, sincerity and discretion; in obedience to God's positive command, and with a praise-worthy view to his honour and glory.

To conclude, there is sometimes as much charity demonstrated in only lending, as there is in absolutely giving; for many a poor family, by our timely aid and assistance in lending them a small matter, may, by their honest industry and application to business, raise themselves into a condition to live, not only comfortably, but with some degree of reputation in the world for the time to come.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us reflect, with the greatest attention, on the injunction before us, that, being fully convinced of its reasonableness and beauty, we may obey it with all the readiness and alacrity imaginable: a law, which, however rigid and repugnant to our inordinate passions and affections it may possibly at first appear, has a direct tendency to raise us to as high a pitch of perfection, as our natures are capable of, and

fit us (be our station what it will) for the services of the Lord our God.

For this purpose, let us seriously consider with ourselves what the employment is, which our blessed Lord has called us to, and intended us for. His intention of coming into this wicked world, was graciously to take us out of it, to raise us above the good or evil of this life, and to conduct us at last to eternal glory, a state of uninterrupted peace and tranquility of mind.

If little provocations can ruffle and disturb us, how then can we be qualified for that happy state? can peace of mind, unmolested by rashness and resentment, subsist in a society, where the least contradiction cannot be endured with any degree of patience? shall we not too soon be guilty of acts of violence and injustice, if we find our passions roused, and inflamed with every trivial offence? shall we not, in a very little time, lie under the government of passion and caprice, so that every thing which happens to create in us the least disgust, shall become with us an inexcusable crime, a crime of the deepest dye? will not such a procedure totally dissolve that only bond of unity, which consists

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consists of love and goodness, and thereby disqualify us, to all intents and purposes, for an ever-blessed, and eternal social state?

Does then, our happiness, as social beings, consist in the government of our passions, in giving a severe check to our resentment, and bearing with willingness and patience, the insults and injuries of wicked men, rather than disturb the community; or ruffle our own tempers? could a dispensation less perfect discover, that it is more glorious to conquer our own Spirits, than to subdue a city? and are we thereby duly prepared to deport ourselves as the governor of the world would have us; and shall we not make it the business of our lives to do so?

Let us reflect on the glorious example which our great law-giver has set us: has Christ our blessed Lord and Saviour performed the tender offices of love and affection in return for the malice and reproaches of a wicked world: has he employed the power of Heaven for the good of those from whom he received the basest acts of ingratitude and injustice? and were his last groans on the cross, uttered for mercy and forgiveness, not only for his persecu-

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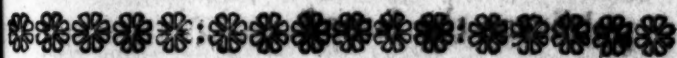
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tors in general, but even those, who were most active and most resolute in his crucifixion; and shall we think much of passing by, or forgiving the little indignities and insults, which we casually meet with from men like ourselves, and to whom, in some instances, it is possible, we ourselves have been the greatest aggressors?

Let us then laud and extol this our beneficent law-giver, who has thus obliged us by his prescription of so worthy a law; a law, in short, so conducive to our everlasting happiness.



CHRIST'S Exhortation to the love of our Enemies.

The TEXT according to St. MATTHEW.

CHAP. V. ver. 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48.

43 Ye have heard that it hath been said,
Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and
hate thine enemy :

44 But

44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.

45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do you more than others? do not even the publicans so?

48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.

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PARALLEL TEXTS to the six preceding VERSES.

43, 44 Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart—thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

LEVIT. xix. 17, 18.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.—JOHN xiii. 34, 35.

Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.

LUKE vi. 27, 28.

Bless them which persecute you : bless and curse not.—ROM. xii. 14.

If thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink : for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

ROM. xii. 20.

Then

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Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do.—LUKE xxiii. 34.

And he (i. e. Stephen) kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.—ACTS vij. 60.

Being reviled, we bless : being persecuted, we suffer it : being defamed, we intreat.

I COR. iv. 12, 13

Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again ; when he suffered, he threatened not.

I PET. ii. 23

Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing : but contrariwise, blessing ; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.—I PET. iii. 9.

45 He left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from Heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.—ACTS xiv. 17.

46, 47 For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye ? for sinners also love those that love them.—LUKE vi. 32.

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48 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.—EPH. v. 1.

Ye shall be holy ; for I am holy.

LEVIT. xi. 44.

Ye shall be holy unto me ; for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.

LEVIT. xx. 26.

As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation ; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.

1 PET. i. 15, 16.

A familiar PARAPHRASE of the six preceding VERSES.

43 **L**ASTLY you have been taught, that notwithstanding you were commanded to love your neighbours ; yet you were permitted to hate and seek the overthrow of all such as oppress you.

44 But I command all my disciples to cultivate such an happy disposition towards goodness and loving-kindness, as to be always tender

der-hearted, and well-affected, even to those persons who treat them with the utmost scorn and hatred; and that they discover this mild temper, this serene frame of mind, both by speaking all the good they are able, even to those who revile and curse them, and by performing all the kind offices of life to those who despitefully use them; and embrace every opportunity to injure and oppress them. And after all this praise-worthy patience and forbearance, when their implacable malice and resentment rises to such a pitch, as to return evil for such good; and still be discontented, unless they can take away their very lives; yet after such premeditated malice, it is my positive injunction, that they pray for those implacable those inhuman creatures, that God Almighty would give them grace to repent of such their heinous, such their unnatural proceedings; and would finally forgive them.

45 That by the constant practice of the golden rule, they may raise themselves to such an eminent degree of goodness, as to be ready on all occasions, to perform every act of benevolence and friendship, without the least murmur or complaint; and thereby approve themselves the true children of their great Creator

and sovereign of the universe, who continues the comforts and blessings of this life, even with a bounteous hand, as well to the wicked and ungrateful, as to his saints, who are ever thankful for his divine favours.

46 This procedure, though sometimes seemingly too difficult to be complied with, I assure my disciples, is highly requisite for their acquisition of my Father's kingdom ; for in case their love and affection is circumscribed, and confined only within the narrow bounds of their friends and well-beloved companions, they do nothing praise-worthy ; nothing more than what is daily practised by the publicans and worst of sinners.

47 Nay, I tell them moreover, that though they proceed to express the warmest love and affection for such as are of their own party and opinion ; yet if they stop there, the very publicans, who are reputed the worst of sinners, carry their tokens of respect and esteem to as high a pitch ; and take delight in the company and conversation of such as agree with them in point of principle and practice.

48 Let me, however, prevail on you, who profess to be my followers, to set the divine being before your eyes for the object of your imitation; and, by doing all the good that in your power lies, to imitate the beneficent preserver of the universe in the most amiable of his perfections.

Occasional REFLECTIONS on the six preceding VERSES.

In the forty-third and forty-fourth verses of the text before us, our blessed Saviour takes notice of another corrupt gloss which the scribes and pharisees had put upon the law of God. The law said, thou shalt love thy neighbour.—LEVIT. xix. 18.

This precept, however, according to the interpretation, had reference only to their own countrymen, the Jews; and they falsely concluded, that they might treat all such as were uncircumcised, every native of any other country, and of a different faith from theirs with all the marks of their mortal scorn and hatred. Our blessed Saviour, however, expresses himself in a quite different way
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thinking. I command all you, says he, who profess yourselves to be my disciples, to love, and be tender-hearted to the whole race of mankind; I require you to love your very enemies. In this injunction the inward affection is required: and I expect, says he, that you bless them that curse you. In this injunction affability, and an external courteous deportment, is required. Do good, again, says he, to them that hate you. In this precept, all real acts of charity and benevolence are enjoined us; and these likewise to be performed to our most inveterate and implacable enemies. Nay, farther, says Christ, pray for those that despitefully use you and persecute you. Now though these are the highest expressions of enmity, reproach, and inhumanity, that can be devised, yet still we are commanded to pray even for those barbarous wretches, who would touch or affect us, if possible, in two of the most tender points, namely, our reputations and our lives. This, in short, is the law of the gospel; this is the law of christian charity; and in the practice of all the duties prescribed in this chapter, we shall find not only our perfection but our glory.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us here observe, with the deepest attention, the great goodness and wisdom wherewith our blessed Lord and law-giver leads us through the various duties of a christian life; let us take peculiar notice how amiably he prepares the way for our more easy reception of them.

When he has raised us above resentment for trivial insults and injuries, and prevailed on us to be calm and sedate under small provocations, and acts of oppressions in matters of no moment or importance, he then proceeds to guide us to perfection; he then sets before our eyes the example of the Almighty himself, the sovereign Lord of the universe, and the origin of all being, or existence for our pattern, for our imitation. He places the God of all created nature in the strongest point of light; with whom is all might, majesty and dominion; and to whom no one can say, why dost thou exercise such an unlimited bounty and benevolence, even towards the most ungrateful, the most obstinate, and worst of sinners?

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Is not this love immense ? is not this goodness beyond all conception ? how ought we to laud and adore this our indulgent law-giver, who is the fountain of mercy, from whence all pity and compassion flows ; who not only bears with the most perverse, most obdurate sinners, but pours down his blessings upon them with the most liberal hand, though altogether undeserving, with the tender and indulgent view only of awakening them to repentance, and preparing them for everlasting happiness. How should our souls be enflamed by so perfect a pattern ! how industrious ought we to be in following, as far as lies in our abilities, so divine, so shining an example !

Let us consider with ourselves, let us meditate on this important lesson of instruction. Let us argue in the following manner. Shall the great Lord of life, the Creator, and all-wise Governor of the universe, thus exercise his goodness towards his offending creatures, of whom we are an ungrateful part, in order to our amendment and regeneration ; shall our great Creator be thus indulgent ; who, notwithstanding he should in his displeasure totally destroy us, could raise out of the dust of the earth, a more noble order of beings, to act with more gratitude and obedience, and to

speak forth his glory in a more exalted manner; and shall not we, poor sinful, helpless creatures, who stand in need of indulgence and forgiveness ourselves, shew some pity and compassion upon our offending fellow-creatures? shall we presume to implore mercy and the remission of ten thousand talents, due to that fountain of love and tenderness; and shall not we make it our glory to imitate that divine Being, by our cultivation of a gentle and social temper, and by shewing our readiness to forgive our offending brother his trivial debt, his hundred pence?

How can we suffer one moment to pass, till we have convinced ourselves, that we are actually possessed of such divine frame of mind, by our imploring, with the utmost sincerity and affection, all manner of blessings on the very man who imprecates the worst of evils upon us? how can we be easy, till we have manifested our good-will and loving-kindness to our fellow-creatures, by aiding and assisting them in a day of distress, with the utmost alacrity and pleasure, though they should return our favours with repeated acts of ingratitude, though they should treat us with contempt and hatred for our love and affection toward them?

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may, notwithstanding the enmity and ill-nature of man should arise to such an height of enormity, as to deprive us of this transitory life; yet let that glorious principle of divine love be perfected in us; and let our last breath, in imitation of our blessed Saviour, be spent in prayer, for the pardon and forgiveness even of those who persecute us with the most implacable malice, and in the warmest and most fervent supplication for their everlasting happiness.

And in order that this happy temper, this serene frame of mind, may be raised in us to the highest pitch, let us reflect with ourselves, to what a dignity such a constant and uniform disposition will exalt us! we shall by that means be taken into the society of the great sovereign of the universe, the Lord of all; and admitted into the presence of his dearly-beloved, and only-begotten son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We shall be acknowledged by him as his brethren, and, by our title under him, as the sons of God.

And let us not flatter ourselves, that we can ever attain to so high a dignity, so exalted a character, unless we make the amiable precepts
above

above prescribed, our steady and perpetual practice.

We find, by daily experience, that there is no man but what is pleased with another, who conforms to his custom and manners; no man but what will caress those who are ready and willing to caress him. What is there, however, in such a procedure, that is any ways uncommon, or indeed praise-worthy; what wonder is it, if we are pleased when we are humoured, and treated with a partial fondness? where is the man that will not love his neighbour, who is ready and willing to indulge him in all his capricious passions?

However, if we would be duly qualified to live for ever; if we would be desirous of acquiring the exalted title of a child of God; we must endeavour, to the utmost of our power, to be like unto him in all our actions, and be conducted by his shining example. Truth, righteousness, and holiness must be the rule of our lives; and love and mercy must be the overflowing of our bosoms; that so by the imitation of our most gracious and bene-

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ificent Creator in all his divine perfections, we may be perfect (that is to say, in our own sphere) as our Father who is in Heaven is perfect.

The End of the Fifth Chapter.

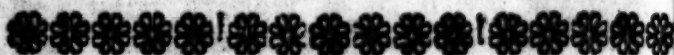
T H E

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BEAUTY of HOLINESS.



The TEXT, according to St. MATTHEW.

CHAP. VI. ver. 1, 2, 3, 4.

CHRIST'S precepts in regard to
ALMS-GIVING.

1 Take heed that ye do not your alms
before men, to be seen of them:
otherwise ye have no reward of your
Father which is in Heaven.

2 Therefore, when thou doest thine alms
do not sound a trumpet before thee
as the hypocrites do, in the syna-
gogues

gogues, and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.

3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left-hand know what thy right-hand doeth :

4 That thine alms may be in secret : and thy Father which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly.

PARALLEL TEXTS to the four preceding VERSES.

1 In any case thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment, and bless thee : and it shall be righteousness, i. e. alms unto thee before the Lord thy God.

DEUT. xxiv. 13.

He hath dispersed, hath given to the poor ; his righteousness endureth for ever ; his horn shall be exalted with honour.

PSALM cxii. 9.

Wherefore,

Wherefore, O King, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquility.—DAN. iv. 27.

As it is written, he hath dispersed abroad he hath given to the poor; his righteousness remaineth for ever. Now he that minisseth seed to the sower, both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness.

2 COR. ix. 9, 10

2, 3 He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity.—ROM. xii. 8.

Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness.—PROV. xx. 6.

Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord.—2 KINGS x. 16.

And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

LUKE xiv. 14

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3 But
followers

Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.

MATT. XXV. 34.

A familiar PARAPHRASE of the four preceding VERSES.

1, 2 **I**N the distribution of your alms to the poor, take peculiar care that you do it not in a public and ostentatious manner : for by such a method of proceeding, you will forfeit all the benefit and advantage that would otherwise arise therefrom in the kingdom of Heaven : as all such hypocrites most certainly do, as are over solicitous, and too fond of popular applause ; for they first make a proclamation of their good intended works in those places particularly as are of the greatest resort, and then, but not before, distribute their alms : now these, I say, have their sufficient reward, have all the ends of their ambition answered, by thus sounding their trumpet, and having the secret satisfaction of being gazed at, and meeting with the applause of the multitude round about them.

3 But as for you, who are my disciples and followers, whose views are of a superior na-

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ture, whose hopes are raised to a more heavenly state, let your acts of bounty and beneficence, or, in other terms, your works of righteousness, be performed as secret as possible, without the least appearance of empty pride and ostentation.

4 And God Almighty, our heavenly Father, who sees your pious intentions, the inmost recesses of your hearts, and perfectly approves of that frame and temper of mind, with which you discharge the duty incumbent on you, namely, with an eye to his glory, and the comfort and refreshment of your indigent fellow-creatures; God Almighty, I say, who sees your good will, and approves your actions, will openly reward you before men and angels in the great day of retribution.

Occasional REFLECTIONS on the four preceding VERSES.

The reader is desired to observe here, in the first place, that our blessed Saviour does not absolutely prohibit the doing our alms, or other good works before men, but the doing them openly, out of pride and ostentation, with sinister view, and secret ambition to be rever-

by men, and applauded for them. The true and only praise-worthy reasons why we should do good works are, that we may glorify God, prove a friendly aid and assistance to our indigent and necessitous brethren ; and above all, promote our own future happiness and salvation. If, however, we bestow our alms, with no other view than to gain the applause and approbation of such strangers as hover round us, we cannot, with any just hopes of success, expect to receive a reward from God, as they were not done with an eye to his glory. We may, indeed, give our alms before men, in case we do it with no other view and design, than to excite others to glorify God, or tempt them to an imitation of our praise-worthy deeds ; for then we obey, in a proper manner, that injunction of our blessed Saviour ; namely, “ Let your light so shine before men, that they seeing your good works may glorify your Father which is in Heaven.” And it is much to be feared, that the misunderstanding of this divine precept has prevailed with divers good christians to conceal their charity and good works, and by that act of imprudence and want of knowledge, have deprived the world of the benefit of their example.

The reader is to observe, in the next place, that there are some copies of our sacred text, wherein the injunction is thus expressed, "Do not your righteousness before men:" and the reason is this; because alms-giving is one considerable branch of that righteousness and justice, which we owe to our indigent neighbours; for uncharitableness is an act of injustice. We are to take peculiar care, however, that the matter of our alms, that is to say, that all our gifts, or free-will-offerings, are such a part of our effects as are righteously, that is, honestly gotten, without fraud or deceit; for to give alms out of what we have procured by any acts of violence or injustice, is robbery, and not righteousness. And lastly, we are to observe, that, in order to prevent the sin and danger of a pharisaical ostentation and vain-glory, our blessed Saviour here exhorts his disciples, "not to let their left hands know what their right hands do," that is, in other terms, to conceal from the world, as much as possible, those acts of bounty and benevolence, which we think proper to confer on our necessitous neighbours; because such secrecy is a kind of testimony of our intentions. And the Egyptians, we find, in their Hieroglyphics,

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glyphics, represent charity by a blind youth, reaching out honey to a bee that has lost her wings.

IMPROVEMENT.

What is it, that our blessed Saviour, and most indulgent law-giver, in this particular passage, requires of us? why, nothing more, than such a frame and temper of mind as is absolutely necessary, not only for our due performance of those divine precepts which he recommends to our practice, but for our procurement likewise of his Father's approbation of all our actions, from whom no secret of the heart, no desire of the soul, can possibly be concealed: and, unless our regard to him is the spring of all our good works, how can we, with any just grounds, expect his countenance or favour? can our moral actions be constant and uniform in any degree at all, unless we are willing to testify, at all times, a ready obedience to that God, who is constantly and invariably indulgent to all those who sincerely love him? our actions will ever be such, as the motives are from whence they flow.

If the applause of men induces us to perform a praise-worthy action to-day; the same applause will tempt us to the commission of some blame-worthy action to-morrow. But if we ardently desire to be as like to our great Creator, as possibly we can; if all our aim and ambition is to gain the approbation of that God, with whom there is not the least shadow of change from the eternal laws of righteousness and truth; then we ourselves shall never change, but be universally just and good, and no ways liable to be perverted by any worldly temptation, how alluring soever.

Let us treasure up then this sacred admonition in our breasts. Let it be our first thought, when we awake in the morning, the first question we ask ourselves, how, or by what means, shall we gain the approbation of the Almighty? and which way shall we procure his favour and most gracious assistance? let every action of our lives be performed with such a precaution, as will demonstrate, that we have a lively sense of its being naked and open to his all-seeing eye. And let that be the foundation from whence it flows. If we be but thus watchful and circumspect in our conduct, then shall we stand fearless in the day of

trial

trial, and Christ himself will be our exceeding great reward.

And forasmuch as our most gracious and bountiful law-giver has been pleased to mention such particular cases, wherein lies the greatest danger of our being perverted by external and worldly allurements, let us be peculiarly careful, and more on our guard than ordinary, in all such instances as he has thought proper to point out to us, least the applause of man should prove the unhappy means of depriving us of the Almighty's indulgence and approbation of our actions.

And forasmuch as there is nothing more apt to strike the human mind than a compassionate regard for the sorrows and afflictions of our fellow-creatures; and, by consequence, there is great danger of our being too deeply affected by the applause of men, and making that the principal, if not the only motive to our bounty and beneficence, how thankful ought we to be to our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who has so distinctly pointed out our duty to us, that our good works may shine before men as they ought; that is to say, that they, seeing them, may glorify their Father who is in Heaven.

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Let us guard then, I say, against the first approaches to popular applause, let not our left hands know what our right perform: but as all our hopes are centered in the favour and approbation of our God; so let our acts of pity and compassion for the distress of our neighbours have no other witness than God alone; that so our faith and sincerity may be proclaimed at the last day before men and angels, and God himself be our great reward.



The TEXTS according to St. MATTHEW

CHAP. VI. ver. 5, 6, 7, 8, to 19 inclusive.

CHRIST'S sacred Precepts with respect to PRAYER.

5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.

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6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathen do: for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

14 For, if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

PARALLEL TEXTS to the eleven preceding VERSES.

5, 6 He (that is, Elisha) went in, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord.—2 KINGS iv. 33.

7 Make not much babling, when thou prayest.—ECCLESIASTICUS vii. 14.

8 They called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal hear us.—And it came to pass, when mid-day was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that

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there was neither voice, nor any to answer,
nor any that regarded.

I KINGS xviii. 26, 29.

9 The Lord's prayer.—LUKE xi. 2, &c.

The Lord's throne is in Heaven.

PSALM xi. 4.

Thus saith the Lord, the Heaven is my
throne, and the earth is my footstool.

ISAIAH lxvi. 1.

O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy
name in all the earth.—PSALM viii. 1.

Holy and reverend is his name.

PSALM cxi. 9.

All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord,
and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall
speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk
of thy power.—PSALM cxlv. 10, 11, and
PSALM cxlviii. throughout.

Father, glorify thy name. Then came there
a voice from Heaven, saying, I have both glo-
rified it, and will glorify it again.

JOHN xii. 28.

Holy,

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Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.

ISAIAH vi. 3.

Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.

ISAIAH viii. 13.

10, 11 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say: Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.—ISAIAH ii. 2, 3

O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

MATT. xxvi. 42

And when he (i. e. Paul) would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying; the will of the Lord be done.—ACTS xxi. 14.

Ble

the BEAUTY of HOLINESS. 171

Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearken-
ing unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the
Lord, all ye his hosts, ye ministers of his that
do his pleasure.—PSALM ciii. 20, 21.

I have esteemed the words of his mouth
more than my necessary food.—JOB xxiii. 12.

Give me neither poverty, nor riches; feed
me with food convenient for me.

PROV. xxx. 8.

Having food and raiment, let us be there-
with content.—1 TIM. vi. 8.

The bread of God is he which cometh down
from Heaven, and giveth life unto the world.
Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore
give us this bread.—JOHN vi. 33, 34.

They gathered it (i e. Manna) every morn-
ing, every man according to his eating.

EXOD. xvi. 21.

They made ready the present against Joseph
came at noon: for they heard that they should
eat bread there—set on bread.—He took and
sent messes unto them from before him.

GENESIS xliii. 25, 31, 34.

R

12 There

172 The DIVINE ORATOR; or,

12 There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.—PSALM cxxx. 4.

I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.—ISAIAH xliii. 25.

Take heed to yourselves. If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him ; and if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent ; thou shalt forgive him.

LUKE xvii. 3, 4.

Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him ? till seven times ? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times : but until seventy times seven.

MATT. xviii. 21, 22.

13 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.—MATT. xxvi. 41.

I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.—JOHN xvii. 15.

There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man : but God is faithful

ful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.—1 COR. x. 13.

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations.—2 PET. ii. 9.

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation; which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

REVEL. iii. 10.

Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all.

1 CHRON. xxix. 11.

14 He that revengeth shall find vengeance from the Lord, and he will surely keep his sins in remembrance. Forgive thy neighbour the hurt that he hath done unto thee, so shall thy sins also be forgiven, when thou prayest, &c.

ECCLESIASTICUS xxviii. 1.

And when ye stand, praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your father also which is in Heaven may forgive you your trespasses.—MARK xi. 25.

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Be

Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.—EPH. iv. 32.

Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

COL. iii. 13.

15 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

MATT. xviii. 35.

He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.—JAMES ii. 13.

A familiar PARAPHRASE of the eleven preceding VERSES.

5 **A** G A I N, when you put up your petitions to the Almighty, you shall not imitate those hypocritical pharisees, who perform their private acts of devotion in such places as are most public; that they may be looked upon as persons of unaffected piety and sanctity of manners; but be assured, that as their principal

cipal, if not sole aim, is to procure the applause of men, that empty and vain applause shall be their only reward.

6 But when you are disposed to make your addressee to the throne of grace, withdraw to some commodious private place; and there offer up your supplications to the Almighty, who is invisible; and the Almighty, notwithstanding he is invisible, sees and approves your devout and pious frame of mind, and will openly reward you, and crown your petitions with the desired success.

7 Let me, however, give you this one precaution: be not guilty of vain repetitions in your prayers, as the Gentiles generally are; who are so thoughtless, as to imagine, that their petitions will be answered the sooner for their use of a multiplicity of needless words; since it is the inward frame and temper of mind only, that God Almighty shews any regard to, and for the sincerity whereof he blesses you, and grants you your requests.

8 Nor does he, doubtless, who is perfectly acquainted with your wants before you mention them, need to be informed of the unhappy situation of your affairs.

9 Let your prayers therefore be composed after the following short, but very comprehensive form.

* “ Almighty God, the creator and governor of all things, and most bountiful benefactor to those who fear and obey thee : grant, that all reasonable creatures, who are capable of understanding the greatness and glory of thy attributes, may unfeignedly admire and adore thee ; and express their veneration and praises of thee, in ways most suitable to the condition of their nature, and the discoveries of thy will.”

10 “ Grant that all mankind may come to the knowledge and belief of thy true reli-

* As this short collect, or form of prayer, commonly called the Lord's prayer, is the best, most perfect, and comprehensive one, that ever was composed ; and proposed by our blessed Saviour himself as the standard and pattern of all future addresses to the divine majesty ; so we have thought proper to oblige our readers with the late reverend Dr. Clarke's most excellent and judicious paraphrase of it, rather than to make an attempt of our own, which, we are highly conscious to ourselves, would, after all our best endeavours, fall extremely short of that justly admired performance.

“ gion :

“ gion : that the kingdom of Christ may be
 “ extended over all the earth, and the eternal
 “ laws of godliness, righteousness, charity,
 “ and sobriety be established through the
 “ whole world. Grant that all, who profess
 “ this thy true religion, may live in perfect
 “ obedience to the laws thereof ; and that
 “ men, as the infirmities of their nature will
 “ permit, may obey thee with proportionable
 “ sincerity and constancy, as do the spirits of the
 “ blessed in Heaven.”

11 “ Bestow upon us every day, through
 “ the remaining part of our lives, as many of
 “ the things of this present world as may be
 “ sufficient for our necessary subsistence, and
 “ for the useful and innocent conveniencies of
 “ life.”

12 “ Forgive us our sins, and withhold thy
 “ punishments which we have thereby de-
 “ served ; in like manner as we freely forgive
 “ all those injuries and offences, which have
 “ by others been done to us.

13 “ Take from us the causes and occasions
 “ of temptations, or else deliver us from the
 “ power of them : that we may not be moved,
 “ either with the enticement of riches, ho-

“ nours,

178 The DIVINE ORATOR; or,

“ours, or pleasure; or with the fear of want,
 “disgrace, or pain; to do any thing know-
 “ingly contrary to thy will. And deliver us
 “from all the evils and calamities, which
 “either the malice of the devil, or the wick-
 “edness or misfortunes of the world, might
 “bring upon us: these petitions we offer up
 “unto thee, O God; knowing that thou canst,
 “and trusting in thy mercy, that thou wilt do
 “for us more than we can desire or deserve;
 “who art infinite in power, glory and ma-
 “jesty from everlasting to everlasting. Amen,
 “i. e. so be it as we have prayed for.”

14 Thus have I given you a plain and com-
 prehensive form of prayer, to guide you in
 your addresses to the divine majesty. But what
 I would have you particularly attend to, is,
 that you pray for forgiveness upon your sincere
 and solemn promise, that you will forgive those
 injuries and insults, that you may possibly meet
 with from your neighbours.

15 Be very careful, therefore, to acquire
 the habits of benevolence, and forgiveness;
 for you may depend upon it, that the Almighty
 will not, for any entreaties or prayers you are
 capable of making, forgive you your trespasses,
 unless you forgive those trespasses which they

commit

commit against you : if, however, you do sincerely, and from your heart, without the least hypocrisy or reserve, forgive men their offences; then you may be assured, that God Almighty will pass by, and forgive you infinitely more heinous offences against himself.

Occasional REFLECTIONS on the eleven preceding VERSES.

In the fifth and sixth verses of our Text, our blessed Saviour warns his disciples against the same pharisaical hypocrisy, pride, and ostentation in praying, as he had before censured and reproved in regard to alms-giving. It was lawful to pray in the * synagogues, and

* As it was lawful to pray in the synagogues standing, and that too before men, as we have above observed, we hope the following account of the Jewish synagogues may be thought no improper, but rather an instructive amusement.

Synagogue, according to the general acceptance of the term, means no more than a congregation, or an assembly, consisting of a great number of persons met together for the dispatch of some public affair of weight and importance. Thus St. John, in his Revelations, calls the false, hypocritical professors in Smyrna and Philadelphia, the synagogue of Satan : but for the most part, by the

to pray standing, and that too before men; but to do this with an artful designing view, only

the term *synagogue* is meant the place where the Jews assembled for the performance of their divine service, or religious worship; as praying, reading, and hearing their holy books, and other instructions. It is frequently mentioned in the gospels, and in the acts of the apostles; because Jesus Christ and his apostles made it a common practice to preach in their synagogues. The origin of these synagogues is not well known; some will have them to be as antient as the ceremonial law. It cannot be denied, say they, that the Jews did worship God publickly every sabbath-day, and on other holy occasions, even when they neither did, nor could go up to Jerusalem: it is therefore highly probable, that there were some convenient places appointed for that purpose.

On the contrary, many learned men have thought them a later institution. Dr. Prideaux affirms, that the Jews had no synagogue before the Babylonish captivity; for the chief service of the synagogue, says he, being the reading the law unto the people, where there was no book of the law to be read, there certainly was no synagogue. But how rare the book of the law was, throughout all Judea, before the Babylonish captivity, many texts of scripture inform us. When Jehoshaphat sent teachers through all Judea, to instruct the people in the law of God, they carried a book of the law with them, (2 Chron. xvii. 9.) which they needed not to have done, if there had been any copies of the law in those cities to which they went; which certainly there would have been,

only to gain popular applause, is here condemned by our blessed Saviour, as a most wicked and

been, had there been any synagogues in them; and when Hilkiab found the law in the temple, (2 Kings xxii. 8.) their behaviour on that occasion sufficiently proves, that they had never seen it before, which could not be, had there been any other copies of it to be found among the people. And, if there were no copies of the law at that time among them, there could then (most certainly) be no synagogues to resort to, for the hearing it read to them. From whence he concludes, that there could be no synagogues among the Jews till after the Babylonish captivity.

As to psalm lxxiv. 8. "They have burnt up all the synagogues of God in the land," or all the assemblies of God, as the original may be translated; our learned author acknowledges it must be understood of places, where the people assembled to worship God: but this does not infer that these places were synagogues; and there is not one of the antient versions, excepting that of Aquila, that so renders this passage. Those that lived at a distance from the temple, or from the tabernacle, before the temple was built, not being able, at all times, to resort thither, they built courts, like those in which they prayed in the tabernacle, and at the temple, therein to offer up their prayers to God, which in after-times we find called by the name *proseuche*. Into one of them, our Saviour is said to have gone to pray, and to have continued therein a whole night. (Luke vi. 2.) What our English version renders, "and continued all night in prayer to God," is in the

and abominable practice. Our whole business in prayer lies with God only; we are not to concern

the original, "and he continued all night in a 'proseuche of God.'"

These proseuches differed from synagogues in several particulars: in the proseuche, every one prayed apart for himself, as in the temple; the buildings were open courts, that had no covering and they were built without the cities, in the fields; whereas, the synagogue was a public edifice, generally situated within the city, in an elevated place; and for the most part covered a top. In the midst of the synagogue was a desk or pulpit, upon which the book, or roll of the law was read. There, likewise, the person stood who intended to harangue the people. At the highest part of the synagogue, or towards the east or over against the door, which was always to the west, as much as possible, was the chest, or press wherein the book, or roll of the law was kept wrapped up in a fine embroidered cloth. The women were there distinct from the men, and seated in a gallery, enclosed with lattices, so that they could see and hear, but not be seen.

Every synagogue had its chief, or, perhaps, several chiefs, and officers, more or less, according to the circumstances of places. There was one called Chazan, who appointed and chanted the prayers; there was another that kept the keys, and was a kind of church-warden, whom they called Sciamus, or servant.

The ruler of the synagogue (Luke viii. 41) presided in the assemblies, and in judicial affairs.

concern ourselves whether men are pleased with our performances or not ; it is sufficient for us, and all we ought to aim at, if our petitions be but sincere ; if they are acceptable in the sight of God, and meet with his

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favour

that were sometimes there decided against those who had given any scandal, or transgressed the law in any important point.

The same presidents invited those to speak in the synagogue whom they judged capable of it, and offered that honour to strangers, if there were any that seemed to have the gift of speaking. Thus our blessed Saviour himself often spoke in those assemblies ; (Luke iv. 16. Matt. ix. 35. and passim.)

And St. Paul being at Antioch, in Pisidia, was invited by the rulers of the synagogue to make a discourse to them for their edification. Acts xiii.

14, 15.

The Jewish authors give this general rule for the construction of Synagogues, that wherever there are ten batelnim, a synagogue ought to be built. The signification of the term batelnim has been much controverted. Buxtorf is of opinion, that it means persons receiving a stipend for duly assisting at divine service ; that there may be always ten persons, at least, to assemble together ; and Lightfoot imagines them to have been ministers and officers of the synagogue. It is affirmed, that in the city of Jerusalem alone, there were no less than four hundred and sixty, or even four hundred and eighty synagogues.

Every

favour and approbation. Our blessed Saviour, in order to dissuade us from being vain-glorious, directs us to the practice of secret or private prayer, to withdraw into our closets, where God Almighty is the only witness of our acts of devotion, and, according to the sincerity of our hearts, will bless and reward us.

As in these two verses a vain-glorious ostentation in prayer is censured by our Saviour, so in the seventh and eighth verses a vain-glorious multiplicity of words, by idle tautologies and impertinent repetitions, is equally condemned.

The true christian is to consider, that his business in prayer is not to inform the Almighty; for he knoweth what things we need before we ask him; nor yet to move and persuade him; for he is our indulgent Father:

Every trading fraternity had one of their own, and even strangers built some for those of their own nation. Hence it is, that (Acts vi. 9.) we find the synagogues of the Libertines, Cyrenians, Alexandrians, Cilicians, and Asiatics, appointed for such of the inhabitants of those cities, or of those nations, or persuasions, as should at any time reside at Jerusalem.

it argues therefore, doubtless, an undue apprehension of God, when we extend our prayers to a needless length. He is here however to observe, that it is not all repetition of the same words in prayer, which Jesus Christ, our all-wise law-giver, in this place reproves and condemns: for he himself prayed thrice, using the same words, "that the cup might pass from him;" neither is the christian to apprehend, that prayers, though sometimes, and upon some particular occasions, continued to a considerable length, are, by this divine precept, absolutely prohibited by christ; for Solomon's prayer, recorded in the eighth chapter of the first book of Kings, is apparently, such.

Our blessed Saviour himself, we are told, continued in prayer all night; and the church, in the twelfth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, made prayers, without intermission, for St. Peter's enlargement.

And moreover, we read of St. Paul's praying night and day, and of his commanding the christians to be instant in prayer, and to continue in prayer. But the prayers which our blessed Saviour here condemns are those which are lengthened out upon a vain and idle notion,

that we shall be heard for our much speaking, or can influence, and move the Almighty by any arguments that we can urge, whilst we continue in our trespasses and sins.

For the prevention of these, and all other defects or faults in our prayers, our blessed Saviour, in the ninth and subsequent verses of the text, has given us a compleat form of prayer, and an exact pattern for the imitation of all his disciples in general. In our evangelist, indeed, it is said, "After this manner pray ye;" but St. Luke the evangelist, expresses himself thus, "When ye pray, say, 'our Father,' &c. Concerning this divine and most excellent prayer, we may observe, in the first place, that this, which is here recorded, was not delivered at the same time with that recorded by St. Luke; but a considerable time before it. For this being a part of the sermon on the mount, was delivered in the year of our Lord thirty-one; but that in St. Luke, in the beginning of the thirty-third year, which accounts for the little variation between them. The disciples do not seem to have understood that their master designed it for a form, but only for a pattern of prayer, and as some general heads, to which they were to reduce their petitions

petitions. It is therefore said in St. Luke, that our blessed Lord, having been at prayer with his disciples, one of them said, " Lord, " teach us to pray as John taught his disciples ; " whereupon our blessed Lord gives them the form there set down, " When ye " pray, say our Father," &c. He does not forbid them to use other forms, but enjoins them to use this.

In the next place, the learned Grotius, Dr. Lightfoot, and divers of our most eminent divines, observe, that this prayer, excepting only the following words, " as we forgive " them that trespass against us," is to be met with in the Jewish liturgies, or forms of prayer. " Our Father which art in Heaven," is in their Seder Tephilloth, as they call their form of prayer. " Let thy great name be " sanctified, and thy kingdom reign," is to be found in their Kaddish. " Let thy memory " be glorified in Heaven above, and in earth " beneath," is in their Seder Tephilloth above-mentioned. These words, " forgive us " our sins," are inserted in the sixth of their eighteen daily prayers. " Deliver us not into " the hand of temptation, and deliver us " from the evil figment," are not only in that,

but in their book called Musar. “For thine-
 “is the power and the kingdom for ever and
 “ever,” is, according to Drusius, their
 usual form of doxology.

Thirdly, we may observe, how easy it
 would have been for our blessed Lord to have
 composed a prayer consisting entirely of new
 matter; but it is plain, he did not affect
 novelty, nor disapprove of the use of forms of
 prayer; for if he had, we may reasonably sup-
 pose he would, on this occasion, have told his
 disciples as much. So far, however, was he
 from doing this, that when he was hanging
 on the cross, he made use of forms extracted
 from the book of psalms. Some are of opi-
 nion, that he used a great part of the twenty-se-
 cond psalm; but that he did of the first verse
 is recorded by St. Mark in the fifteenth chapter
 and the thirty-fourth verse; “my God, my
 “God, why hast thou forsaken me!”
 Another prayer our blessed Saviour used, when
 he gave up the ghost, was taken out of the
 thirty-first psalm, and recorded by St. Luke,
 in the forty-sixth verse of his twenty-third
 chapter; namely, “into thy hands I com-
 “mend my spirit.”

And

And lastly, had our blessed Lord intended, that his disciples should have used this prayer only, till they were endued with power from on high, by their reception of the miraculous gifts of the holy Ghost, it is highly probable, that he would have told them so ; and that they would have told their followers as much.

As to the two last verses, in regard to forgiveness, our blessed Saviour repeats that duty over and over ; and frequently inculcates it (as there is no duty to which our corrupt natures are more backward) in the holy gospels : and there he assures us, that forgiving others is an indispensable duty on which we are to expect the remission of our sins from God.

From whence we may learn, that every time we make our addresses to God in prayer, and beg forgiveness of him as we forgive others ; if we do not forgive them heartily and sincerely, fully and freely, chearfully and with a willing heart, we only fly in the face of the Almighty, and our prayers are no better than a kind of imprecation of his vengeance on our own heads.

I M P R O V E

IMPROVEMENT.

By these divine admonitions, these important precautions of our blessed Saviour, let us be constantly on our guard ; and when we are inclined to make our addresses to the throne of grace, let us withdraw to some secret place, lest we should be turned aside from the due discharge of our duty by any worldly allurements whatsoever ; lest vain-glory, hypocrisy, and the mean ambition of meeting with applause from men should creep into our acts of devotion, and render them fruitless and ineffectual. Let us consider, that it is the great God of Heaven and earth that we are making our addresses to ; that he is no ways to be blinded by any artful methods of delusion ; that his all-seeing eye beholds, in the clearest light, our inmost thoughts and affections ; and according to the sincerity or impurity of our hearts, he will either reward or punish us. Let us recollect, that, as he has endued us with reason, so he will expect a reasonable service from us. The service of the lips, if our devotion be insincere, is, in fact, no better than sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. Such deceitful, base, and hypocritical supplications, in a word, will be accounted no less a crime, than making a mock of the supreme Being ;
and

and the great governor of the universe, instead of answering such mean desires, will resent the affront, and with the utmost severity punish it accordingly,

Let this precaution, therefore, of our blessed Saviour, this warm exhortation to truth and sincerity, in all our addresses to the divine Majesty, be ever before our eyes; in order that the words of our mouths may prove faithful images of the thoughts of our hearts; and true, though but very faint representations of our inward frame and temper of mind. And, in order to the preservation of an habitual awe and reverence of our great Creator, and most bountiful benefactor, let our supplications be frequent, our words well-ordered, but very few, and respectful; and, whilst our bodies are laid prostrate before the great Lord of the universe, let our hearts, with the lowest humility, be perfectly resigned to his good-will and pleasure. Let us not presume to hope for his favour and approbation, but in that way which he has appointed us to pursue. It is sincerity of heart and sanctity of manners that must recommend our prayers to his acceptance.

Let us listen still further to the rules prescribed us by our divine law-giver, in order that our requests to the Almighty may meet with

with a favourable reception, and be crowned with success ; let us consider that, as we are frail mortals, and as such, engaged daily, more or less, in human affairs, we stand exposed to the offering of insults, and doing acts of injustice to others, as well as receiving like injuries and affronts from them. And from thence we may reasonably conclude, that the acceptance of our petitions at the throne of grace, and the remission of our trespasses and sins, in regard to God, will in a great measure depend on our cheerful pardon and remission of those offences, which we casually meet with from our fellow-creatures. Let us impress, therefore, deeply on our minds, the absolute necessity of forbearance, and of the duty incumbent on us to forgive the injuries we from time to time receive from our neighbours : since the pardon and remission of our much greater number and more enormous transgressions in the sight of God, is not with reason to be expected, but on those conditions. We may reflect, however, with great comfort and satisfaction on this, that, if we treat our neighbours with pity and compassion, and shew mercy toward them, and relieve them, when we see them in distress ; “ those who are
 “ merciful, will most certainly obtain mercy.”

And

And here again, let us recollect all our powers ; let us read over and over this most important declaration of our divine law-giver, which so powerfully affects the whole race of mankind : a declaration, that carries along with it, either everlasting bliss, or eternal destruction.

Let us argue thus with ourselves ; have we not the word of truth, and sacred scriptures to assure us, that in case we indulge ourselves in anger, and breathe revenge against our neighbours ; if we pursue them with implacable malice and hatred, and will never forgive them ; that then God Almighty, the great Lord and governor of the universe, will never forgive us ? on the other hand, however, have we not the same sacred scriptures to assure us, that in case we will use our utmost endeavours to acquire a meek and lowly temper and frame of mind ; if we will but take pity and compassion on our offending brethren, and with sincerity forgive them, then God will be merciful and gracious to us, will hear our prayers, and forgive us all our transgressions, though ever so numerous, or of the deepest dye ? and if we are but fully convinced of a truth so important as this is, shall we suffer any of the tempestuous passions to swell and rage in

in our bosoms? shall resentment, envy and discontent, scorn and hatred possess our breasts? shall we presume to indulge ourselves in a revengeful temper? and shall we be perfectly in a flame of fury upon being treated with coldness and want of respect, with every little trivial insult, and mark of contempt? no, far be it from us: — for by such indiscretion, such an unchristian-like deportment, we bid defiance, as it were, to the mercy and goodness of our great Creator. Let us, therefore (as our everlasting woe, or eternal happiness, will depend in so great a measure on our conduct in this fundamental and most important article) exert our pity and compassion, our forbearance and forgiveness towards our neighbours: let us, in silence, pass over their worst of offences, as we live in hopes of having our own more enormous trespasses blotted out of God's remembrance, and, on our sincere repentance, of having them for ever buried in oblivion, and totally forgiven: and if we will but come to this pious resolution, we may depend on our being delivered from evil in the day of temptation; and, at the last day, on our standing approved by the great Judge of the quick and the dead.



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